

Agenda-shaping in the Arctic Council

Projecting national agendas in a consensus-based regime

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Master's thesis

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UNIVERSITY OF OSLO

May 2015

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Abstract

Traditionally, literature on formal leadership has neglected the role of the chairmanship held by states in interstate fora, with several arguing that such an administrative position is of no importance to the country that holds it. However, Jonas Tallberg (2003a, 2006, 2010) argues that the chairmanship possesses an arsenal of means, which can be used to secure a state's national interests. The agenda-shaping powers of the chair enable a state to set the agenda, structure the agenda according to its own national interests, while also excluding items that do not coincide with state goals. Tallberg's framework has not, to my knowledge, been applied to a non-decision-making and consensus-based institution such as the Arctic Council.

In this thesis, I seek to investigate the power resources available to the chair of the Arctic Council, and ask: *How, and to what degree did Norway and Canada project their Arctic national agendas through holding the chairmanship position of the Arctic Council?*

I use Tallberg's conceptual framework on two separate qualitative case studies of the Norwegian and Canadian chairmanship period in the Arctic Council (respectively from 2006 to 2009 and 2013 to 2015). Based on qualitative interviews, and literature studies, I find that Tallberg's theoretical framework also has explanatory power in studies of fora where the chairmanship is not equipped with decision-making power, and that the chairs in the Arctic Council have room to maneuver, due to their ability to develop new practices, set the agenda, and structure it according to their national interests. Both Norway and Canada explicitly used the position to project their national interests; however, this process manifested itself in different manners. While Canada showed less constraint in using the position for domestic gain, Norway acted in a more discrete manner, but still managed to secure deals of long-term value, which they would not have reached without the chairmanship position. Furthermore, the analytical insight and tools used in this thesis could prove useful for the study of other chairmanship periods in the Arctic Council.

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisor Kristine Offerdal at Norwegian Institute for Defense Studies (IFS) for her thorough feedback, vast knowledge, good spirit and encouragements throughout this process. Furthermore, a special thanks goes to Dario Iulianella. Your commitment to Arctic politics has been a source of inspiration throughout this period, and I am truly grateful for our cooperation the last year. For proof reading and academic discussions, Naomi Ichihari Røkkum's critical mind and red pen has been of great help. Throughout the year, Andreas Østhagen has presented me to an exciting research community on Arctic affairs, for that I am very grateful.

I would also like to thank all of my informants, who have shared their knowledge and provided me with insights I would not have managed to acquire on my own.

Finally, I want to thank Julie Gaby Berger, Charlotte Bech Blindheim and Joakim Chavez Seldal for invaluable support. All mistakes and inaccuracies remain my own.

Anniken Celine Berger

Oslo, May 2015

Word Count: 31.360

Abbreviations

| | |
|--------|--|
| AEPS | Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy |
| AMAP | Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program |
| ACAP | Arctic Contaminants Action Program |
| ACIA | Arctic Climate Impact Assessment |
| ADHR | Arctic Human Development Report |
| AIA | Aleut International Association |
| AAC | Arctic Athabaskan Council |
| AEC | Arctic Economic Council |
| CAFF | Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna |
| CICAR | Canadian International Centre for the Arctic Region |
| EPPR | Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response |
| EAP | Economic Action Plan |
| GCI | Gwich'in Council International |
| ICC | Inuit Circumpolar Council |
| IPS | Arctic Council Indigenous Peoples' Secretariat |
| OBP | Observed Best Practices |
| PAME | Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment |
| RAIPON | Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia and Far East |
| SAO | Senior Arctic Official |
| SAR | Search and Rescue Agreement |
| SDWG | Sustainable Development Working Group |
| UNCLOS | United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea |

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1 Introduction

The chairmanship position in interstate fora is a phenomenon that has received limited systematic research by political scientists (Tallberg 2010, 241). The general conception is that the chairmanship position is of such formal character, it makes little difference who holds it. The expectations for the chairmanship are limited too; meetings should be well prepared and run smoothly, documents should be distributed on time and in all languages, and logistics should function properly (Elgström 2003, 1–2). The chair's ability to promote private concerns is considered highly limited, and the position is viewed as being merely an administrative responsibility.¹

Nevertheless, if the chairmanship position does not entail any mentionable degree of power, then why do states compete over the right to appoint the chairmen of multilateral conferences and international organizations? With multilateral negotiations as the most prominent method by which states address joint problems, one cannot overlook the power inherent in the chairmanship position, according to Tallberg. He argues in favor of the chairmanship position as a potential power platform in international cooperation, and criticizes previous research for having too narrow a focus on the repertoire of means the chair holds to pursue its own national interests. These means cannot be addressed and understood fully if one uses an agenda-setting approach to understand the influence that follows the position. Rather, the chairmanship needs to be viewed as what Tallberg presents as an *agenda-shaping* position, where the state holding the position can exert influence by raising awareness to certain issues (agenda-setting), put varying emphasis on issues already on the agenda in accordance to its national interest (agenda-structuring) and through blocking unfavorable issues from the agenda (agenda-exclusion). These three forms of influence are distinct and mutually exclusive in logical and conceptual terms (Tallberg 2003b, 5). The core notion of this conceptualization is that an actor exerts the same amount of influence when de-emphasizing or withholding issues from the agenda, as when he or she adds new issues. Furthermore, if the institution has a rotating chairmanship cycle, this will further increase the chair's potential to pursue national interests. The chair's procedural control and right to represent the

¹ The term chairmanship, chairman and chair will be used interchangeably throughout the thesis, referring to the formal leadership position held by states in interstate fora.

institution to the outside world provides it with more opportunities to shape the outcomes of multilateral negotiation (Tallberg 2010, 242).

1.1 Aim of thesis

The new and vast challenges facing the Arctic in the coming years will present Arctic stakeholders with new challenges and opportunities, as the region gradually begins to open up as a result of climate change. There will be increased human activities in the region in forms such as oil and gas development, commercial shipping, industrial fishing and ship based tourism (Dodds 2013, 2; Young 2011, 327). The research on the Arctic region and the Arctic Council is dominated by a focus on security and geopolitical issues. With a rising global interest in the Arctic region, I argue that to take a closer look at the chairmanship of the Arctic Council, which is the main forum for international cooperation in the region, is also of great importance. To my knowledge, so far no studies have been conducted on the chairmanship position in the Council.

Therefore, I ask: *How, and to what degree did Norway and Canada project their national Arctic agendas through the chairmanship position of the Arctic Council?*

To answer my research question, I conduct two in-depth analyses of the Norwegian and Canadian chairmanship period (respectively from 2006-2009 and 2013-2015). Through these two qualitative case studies, I aim to increase the knowledge on the chairmanship position of the Arctic Council. I will investigate the performance of the different chairmanships, by examining how they have chosen to carry out the chairmanship role, what functions they prioritized, and what strategies they used to reach their objectives. So far, there are few studies that have attempted to wed general political science concepts and theories to the chairmanship institution (Elgström 2003, 4). Hence, to do this, I use Tallberg's conceptual framework of the chair as an *agenda-shaper*, which is based on rational choice institutionalism.

This framework has previously only been used on the Presidency in the European Union,² a decision-making body where the Presidency³ is equipped with decision-making power. The Arctic Council is, on the other hand, a high level forum (even though I argue that it is closer to an institution in section 4.2 in chapter 4), and consensus-based. However, according to Tallberg, the analytical framework creates opportunities for comparing EU Presidency behavior with the performance of chairs in other international contexts (Elgström 2003, 192). Nevertheless, due to institutional differences I see the need to modify the operationalization of Tallberg's conceptualization so that it will be more applicable to an Arctic Council context (see section 2.5 Operationalization and limitations in the second chapter). I manage this by de-emphasizing some elements of the chairs ability to broker agreements and negotiate strategies, and focus solely on the chair's agenda-shaping powers. Inherent in Tallberg's conceptualization is the idea that all states engage in agenda-shaping, but they differ in which issues they introduce, emphasize, de-emphasize, or neglect, as a result of exogenously defined variation in national preferences (2003b, 5). Hence, I do not aim to evaluate the effectiveness of the chairmanship, to which degree they have been successful, or reached their goals set out in the chairmanship agenda. Neither do I compare the two chairmanship periods. Rather, I conduct separate analyses of the two chairmanship periods, using the same theoretical concepts and tools, to answer my research question.

Based on method triangulation as described by Tansey (2007), the analysis rests on semi-structured research interviews with central actors involved with the chairmanship in Norway and Canada, in addition to written primary and secondary sources. The written primary sources are a selection of official documents and statements, in addition to meeting documents from the Arctic Council, which are available at the Council's web page. The secondary literature consists of scientific papers and media reports. Due to the lack of secondary literature on the chairmanship periods, the research interviews are used to gain insight to the period in question.

² See for example the book *European Union Council Presidencies: A comparative perspective* by Ola Elgström (2003).

³ The term Presidency and chairmanship is treated interchangeably in chapter 1 and 2 of this thesis.

1.2 Outline

The thesis consists of seven chapters. The second chapter gives an overview of the literature on formal leadership and a presentation of Tallberg's theoretical framework, in addition to a modified version of the framework that I will use when analyzing the chairmanship periods of Norway and Canada. The third chapter is a presentation of the qualitative case study method I have used to answer my research question, in addition to how I collected the data and some thoughts regarding the validity and reliability of my findings. In the fourth chapter, I present the Arctic Council, and discuss the formal rules surrounding the chairmanship position. Then, in the fifth and sixth chapter, I analyze the Norwegian and the Canadian chairmanship periods. In the seventh chapter, I give an overview of my findings, and discuss whether the chairmanship position of the Arctic Council can be said to be an agenda-shaping position. Finally, I give some concluding remarks and suggestions for further research.

2 Theoretical framework

This chapter is structured in five parts. The first is a short review of the existing literature in the field of formal leadership. The second part explains how decentralized bargaining gives rise to a number of collective action problems, which creates a need for formal leadership and provides the formal leader with privileged power when it comes to agenda-management, brokerage and representation. The third part presents Tallberg's (2003b, 2006, 2010) conception of the chair as an *agenda-shaper*, with authority over agenda-setting, agenda-structuring and agenda-exclusion. These power resources, in addition to institutional effects like rotating chairmanship, the chair's procedural control and its function as the institution's representation to the outside world, provides the chair with an arsenal of means that it can use to promote national interest and exert influence over outcomes. I conclude the chapter by presenting the theoretical assumptions as drawn from Tallberg's conceptualization, in a modified form, which I use to analyze the chairmanship periods of Norway and Canada in the Arctic Council.

2.1 Responsibility without power?

A prevalent view of the chairmanship positions is that they are so formal that it is irrelevant who is holding this position (Tallberg 2006, 118). The conventional wisdom is that the chairmanship position characterized by “responsabilité sans pouvoir”⁴ – responsibility without power. The literature on political leadership by states in interstate fora is indeed extensive, and it is often divided in two strands: Studies of formal and informal leadership by states.⁵ The literature on political leadership is dominated by the conception of informal leadership, and there is a generic divide between the two strands (Tallberg 2006, 118, 2010, 261). The literature on informal leadership often deal with the type of influence anchored in structural power, entrepreneurial capacity or intellectual capital that (for example Moravcsik

⁴ The quote originally stems from a description of the European Commissions Presidency's agenda-shaping powers by Jean-Louis Dewost (1984, 31).

⁵ In this thesis, the term chairmanship refers to the formal leadership position held by states in interstate fora, not individuals or organizations. When referring to the literature on political leadership (both formal and informal), I refer to leadership by states in interstate fora.

1999; Underdal 1994; Young 1991). The concept of formal leadership by states, on the other hand, has yet to be assessed in-depth by international relations theorists. Hence, IR theorists have so far been unable to provide a theoretically grounded explanation of “when, how and why formal leadership matters” (Tallberg 2010, 242). Tallberg’s contribution is meant to fill this gap, because: “(...) access to the chairmanship grants actors informational and procedural assets they otherwise would not have possessed, permitting them to influence outcomes in ways they otherwise would not have done” (Tallberg 2010, 261). The impact of formal leadership on outcomes is a product of a two-step logic, where states “first delegate process functions to the chairmanship in response to specific bargaining problems, and chairs subsequently draw on privileged power resources to influence the efficiency and distributive dimension of negotiations” (Tallberg 2010, 242).

Despite the acknowledgement that a formal leadership position entails some sort of power, political scientists have been slow to ask and answer questions that are raised by these observations. So far, emphasis has been put on assessing, in empirical terms, the degree of influence and the effectiveness of individual Presidencies (usually of decision-making bodies like the EU, the UN and others) and of the institution as such (Bassompierre 1988; Edwards and Wallace 1977; Kirchner 1992; Svensson 2000). Still, the general view is that a formal leader has very limited possibilities because of the already inherited agenda, which needs to be followed-up: “Forced to attend those issues that are already on the agenda, the Presidency enjoys few opportunities, if any, to advance its own priorities” (Elgström 2003, 20). Confronting this idea, Tallberg argues that the chairmanship has a great deal of influence: “Chairmen in multilateral institutions both facilitate and influence decision-making by managing the agenda, brokering agreements, and representing the decision-making body vis-à-vis external partners” (Tallberg 2006, 118).⁶ Tallberg’s approach is based on rational choice institutionalism, which assume that utility-maximizing states acts out of self interest, and are central actors in the political process (Jönsson and Tallberg 2001, 5). Opportunistic chairs will take advantage of these privileged resources for both collective and private gain, according to Tallberg (2006, 119).

⁶ The Arctic Council is as mentioned not a decision-making body. This will be discussed in detail in section 2.5 and also in chapter 4, section 4.3.

2.2 The demand for formal leadership

Hence, the privileged role of the agenda-shaper occurs because of three collective action-problems create the need for formal leadership: (1) The demand for agenda management, (2) the demand for brokerage and (3) the demand for representation. Following the rational institutionalist line of thinking, “(...) agenda-shaping is the need to ensure a stable and sufficient provision of policy initiatives in a political system” (Tallberg 2003b, 31). A majority-rule system that grants equal opportunities of agenda-setting to all actors, will often result in an over-crowded and unstable agenda. Therefore, to delegate process powers to the chairmanship represents a functional response to what would else be collective-action problems in bargaining situations in multilateral negotiations. There are especially three forms of collective action problems that will be solved with the delegation of power to a chair: (1) agenda failure, (2) negotiation failure and (3) representation failure (Tallberg 2006, 121). These three features create a demand for agenda management, brokerage and representation:

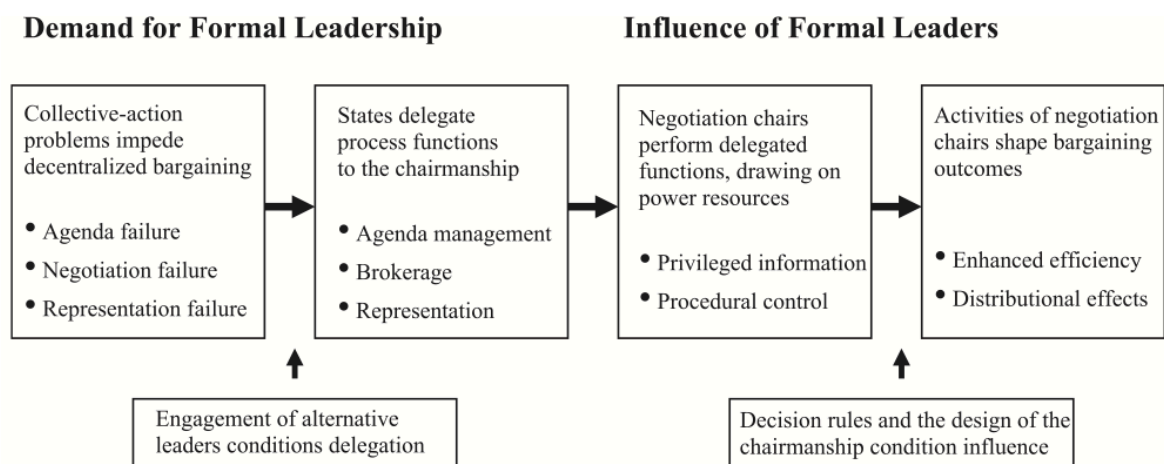


Figure 1. Formal leadership. A rationalist institutionalist theory (Tallberg 2006)

The Demand for Agenda Management

The overarching characteristic of negotiations with several actors is “its complexity along all conceivable dimensions” (Tallberg 2006, 127; Young 2002, 163–165). *Agenda failure* (1) becomes a fact when agendas are unstable, overcrowded or underdeveloped. Multilateral negotiations are deeply complex, with many actors, issues, and preferences in addition to

many different policy levels. Therefore, when the agenda management is not sufficient - or not present at all, the states' capacities to negotiate and conclude efficient agreements are seriously reduced. When this task is delegated to the chairmanship, the problem with a non-existing agenda-management is more or less gone. In decision systems that grant equal agenda-setting opportunities to all actors are liable to issue cycling and will be unable to secure stable majorities for the proposals advanced. This means that every proposal can be beaten by another proposal, and therefore no proposal constitutes an equilibrium upon which the parties can agree. To prevent this, procedures for agenda control needs to be institutionalized. It is recognized both by negotiation theorist and rational-choice theorists that procedures and practices that provides the chair with such gate-keeping authorities will contribute to limit the challenges related to complexity and issue cycling. In order to reach agenda stability, states delegate agenda-management tasks to the chairmanship of multilateral negotiation bodies. Generally, the chairmanship can keep the agenda to manageable proportions, assign priority to the issues on the agenda, and structure the negotiations. The chair has the authority to decide the sequence, frequency and method of negotiation, as well as "specific decisions on the structure of meetings, the format of the meeting's agenda, the right to speak, voting procedure and the summary of results" (Tallberg 2006, 123–124).

The Demand for Brokerage

In multilateral negotiations, states have tactical reasons to withhold or hide information about their true preferences. This may hide the underlying zone of agreement, and thereby undermine the possibilities of reaching an agreement. To have a chair to function as a broker is therefore a functional response to this risk of what Tallberg labels as *negotiation failure* (2). This term captures one of the classic bargaining problems. Following the rationalist bargaining theory, negotiations can break down as a result of two reasons. The first is because the parties discover that negotiation cannot create a better outcome together than the already existing alternatives. The second occurs when parties conceal information about their true preferences. Multilateral bargaining situations constitute a challenge for the parties to identify each others' true preferences, even if the number of participating states is 15, 50 or 150 (Tallberg 2003b, 126). To reveal your true preferences is non-tactical because it deprives you of the weapon of concessions that later can be used to extract favors from others. Hence, states have an incentive to be secretive about their actual preferences. This reduces the zone of agreement – perhaps to such an extent that negotiations break down. Even though it is not

a written obligation for the chair, it is usually a common practice among states to share information about their private preferences with negotiating chairs. The state holding the chair is therefore equipped with privileged information about the member state's preferences, and with that information, it can identify underlying zones of agreement and construct compromises. The chair functions as a formal mediator, and helps the member states to reach agreements that they would be unable to reach on their own.

The Demand for Representation

The member states of an international institution need to agree on some kind of collective representation to external actors. Institutions are often interdependent on the outside world, since activities in one area often affect activities in another field. How the body is interdependent or interacts with external political processes or actors varies greatly. This type of interdependence is by regime theorists labeled as “institutional interplay”, and often points to the relationships among trade regimes, environmental regimes and social regulation regimes (Tallberg 2006, 127; Young 2002, 163–165). Since membership in international institutions or organizations is often limited and restricted, for example to regional or geographical spaces, it is a need for procedures to handle relations with non-members and other external actors. Furthermore, membership of international regimes and institution tends to grow and expand over time. This expansion requires the already existing members to negotiate over the terms of accession and the implementation of the regime's rules. There is a need for a unitary body or leader that can represent the institution or regime to the outside world, and the chairmanship is hence empowered with the right to speak on behalf of the collective.

2.3 Promoting national interest through the chairmanship position

To give a formal leader control over agenda management, brokerage and representation helps to avoid the three pitfalls described earlier, namely agenda failure, negotiation failure and representation failure. However, to equip the chairmanship with such powers will at the same time raise the question of whether it is given too much power. A way of solving the issue of power concentration is to put procedural constraints on the power given to the chair, and

create competition for the agenda-shaper position. Another option is to institutionalize the agenda-shaping opportunities to be a rotating authority. Here, I will discuss some consequences related to a rotating chairmanship system.

2.3.1 The merits of a rotating chairmanship system

Through a rotating chairmanship system, each government is granted a turn to get privileged opportunity to influence the institutions agenda for a limited time period. This is viewed as a fair system, and is used in organizations and institutions of all kinds, both at the national and international level, because of the demand for formal leadership that occurs due to collective action problems. In institutions with a rotating chairmanship, governments accept exploitation of the office to a much larger extent than what is the case in other types of formal leadership arrangements (Tallberg 2003b, 33). This is because the power nested in the chairmanship role is temporary and time limited, and it is also distributed equally among the member states. This makes the other member states much more willing to let the chair pursue its national interest when holding the position, because they know that the time will come when they themselves will hold the position, and then they will reap the fruits of the possibilities that come with the position.

Accordingly, while elected state chairs at e.g. UN conferences have been confronted with control mechanisms and decision rules that limit the scope for distributional challenge, the rotating chairmanships in for example the EU have created a dynamic where state representatives take turns in exploiting the office for national purposes (Tallberg 2010: 243). To hand the mentioned authorities to a formal leader will simultaneously give rise to new concerns. The most important one is that delegating authority to a state automatically creates a problem of neutrality. Since the leader is an agent too, it's interests will influence the way it performs its functions.⁷ The principal-agent model has been incorporated by some rational choice institutionalist, who view states as principals who delegate functions to international institutions – which are treated as agents. In Tallberg's approach, the states or agents are rather pursuing their own interests than the principal's. Thus, this represents a breach with the idea or ideal of the neutral, formal leader. Still, the norm that the chair should be neutral and

⁷ Described in detail in *The Engines of European Integration: Delegation, Agency and Agenda Setting in the EU* by Mark A. Pollack (2003).

impartial is almost uncontested (Elgström 2003, 39, 196). According to Elgström, presidencies are seldom neutral and not always impartial. A state will never manage to fully neglect its own interests whilst holding the chairmanship position, because certain biases and specific relationship to other actors inside or outside the institution will always exist. Relational impartiality is therefore impossible (Elgström 2003, 39). When it comes to norms, the rationalist predicts that chairmen follow these if the gains by doing so prevail over the costs (Elgström 2003, 204). Reputational concerns come from the rationalist idea that a positive reputation is of strategic value for an actor. Not following the existing norms can result in costs if it provokes political sanctions, and also in the future, if the actor's reputation is damaged in any sense (Tallberg 2006, 139). Moreover, since the actor is an agent too, it is an inherent assumption in Tallberg's theory that it will pursue its own national interest.

2.3.2 The possibility to pursue national interest

Following a rational logic, the chairmanship position represents an additional arena for securing national interest for the state in question. A state's chairmanship preferences are the product of a long and careful process of interest aggregation at the national level. The process of identifying national key interests involves all line ministries and many government agencies, and the process can be an indicator for how much weight the position is being given by the government in question (Elgström 2003, 193). In addition, other actors lobby the government in order to convince politicians and civil servants that their concerns should be given top priority in the chairmanship agenda.

How comprehensive the agenda is, is usually a reflection of the domestic policies of the country in question. In this sense, the public opinion back home can limit the chair's ability to take initiatives and construct compromises: "Certain issues are sufficiently sensitive in domestic politics that any compromise on the national interest would be politically hazardous for the government" (Elgström 2003, 195). This will most likely become extra clear when there is a prospect for elections in the near future. According to Elgström, this tends to reinforce already existing domestic constraints: "The government in office is anxious to avoid decisions and compromises that can be exploited by its national party competitors" (2003, 195). It also wants to claim credit for the institution's initiatives and decisions that can reflect positively upon it at the domestic level. The chairman therefore may wish to use the

chairmanship strategically as a means of affecting the evolution of public opinion, “thus expanding the government’s room for maneuver in the future” (2003, 195). The formed agenda typically has to serve three considerations: (1) domestic interests, which also can be (2) framed as common interests for the region or theme being dealt with, and lastly, (3) that the issues have a reasonable likelihood of progress during the chairmanship period. The latter is often of particular interest to the chairing country, because they want to maximize their impact while they have the position to do so, and also want to look back on measurable results.

The chairmanship possesses an arsenal of means to shape the agenda through both formal rules and informal institutional practices that have developed over time (Tallberg 2003b, 22). Still, there exists a red line in terms how much the chair can pursue its own interest. It is difficult to say exactly where this red line goes, but it is possible to define the contours of such a line. The limits on acceptable exploitation can be defined by the consequences of the agenda-shaping efforts (2003b, 33). This means that when the agenda-shaping efforts favor the chair, but the long-term consequences for the other member states are uncertain or insignificant, the agenda maneuvering is likely to be accepted by the other states.

However, when the agenda-shaping efforts involve issues of power distribution that threaten to change the fundamental rules of the game or the future allocation of co-operative gains, it is more often met with negative reactions and resistance from the other states. Following a rational choice institutionalist view on formal leadership, chairs conduct cost and benefit-calculation to see how far they can go in pursuing their true preferences through the chairmanship position. The government in charge has to consider the preferences of other actors in analyzing which strategies to select, taking into account the formal rules and procedural norms that constitute its institutional context (Elgström 2003, 11).

2.4 The chair as an agenda-shaper

Elgström and Tallberg (2003, 19) stress the importance of intergovernmental bargaining models that recognizes the privileged position of the Presidency. They argue that the term *agenda-setting* is treated too narrowly in previous literature on chairmanships. Typically, influence is equated with the introduction of new issues on the agenda. Tallberg and Elgström

argue in favor of broadening the concept of agenda-setting for it to be useful in analyzing the chairmanship position as a power role. Furthermore, it is important to note that Tallberg is not advancing a unified theory of when the chairmanship succeeds in its agenda-shaping efforts, but rather to present the wide repertoire of means the state holding the position can use throughout the period in question. Following a rationalist understanding of the Presidency influence, Tallberg suggests that the term should entail the Presidency not only as an *agenda-setter*, but also as an *agenda-shaper*. Instead of viewing the inherited and unexpected issues as constraints on the Presidency's power, Tallberg argues that these rather are additional sources of influence through means of manipulation. Even though there usually are issues already placed on the agenda, they are not immune to new agenda-shaping efforts. The chairmanship can introduce new issues on the agenda (*agenda-setting*), put different emphasis on issues that are already on the agenda (*agenda-structuring*), and they can deliberately remove issues from the agenda (*agenda-exclusion*). These three forms of influence are distinct and mutually exclusive in logical and conceptual terms. The idea is that an actor exerts just as much influence when he or she sets the agenda, as with the things he or she leaves out of it (2003, 21).

When studying the degree of influence of formal leadership by states, it is important to include both the formal and informal power that comes with the position. The informal power is necessary to include, because "Nowhere in the treaties has the Presidency been delegated specific formal powers to initiate proposals for the new EU policy, to structure the agenda according to its own liking, or to exclude issues it does not consider worthy of consideration" (Elgström 2003, 22). The state holding the chair in other words possesses a position and an arsenal of means, both formally anchored and developed through informal institutional practices, that enable forms of agenda-shaping. All states that hold the role of chair engage in agenda-shaping of some sort, but they vary in the issues they introduce, emphasize, de-emphasize or neglect. This is a result of exogenously defined variation in national preferences, according to Tallberg. The agenda-shaper, however, does not work in a vacuum. It is a position based on mutual dependence, and the agenda is often created and developed in close relations to the other member states and the working groups.

2.4.1 Agenda-setting

The agenda-setting efforts can take three forms: First, the chair can shape the policy agenda by (1) *raising the awareness* of problems that so far have been neglected in the institutions work. It can call attention to an issue, and frame and define the chosen concerns that they think deserve collective attention. This can involve for example awareness-raising efforts in previously uncharted areas, regions, countries or other issues that have been neglected in the past. Additionally, the chair set the themes for the informal meetings that take place in its home country, at both ministerial and working-group levels. Secondly, the chair may (2) *develop concrete proposals for action* to address specific questions. How this is carried out depends on the rules for the formal position, but most often this has to be done through a consensus-based regime. Thirdly, the state holding the chair can (3) *develop new institutional practices*. Since the chairmanship position often is institutionally underdeveloped, that is, often with few explicit formal responsibilities, it is open for interpretation by the state holding it. Hence, there is room for maneuver in the chairmanship position, either through developing the office as such, or introduce new practices.

2.4.2 Agenda-structuring

The term agenda-structuring is defined as the capacity to structure decision-making by emphasizing or de-emphasizing items on a political agenda. This is often completely overlooked or treated as an integrated part of agenda-setting in the literature on the chairmanship position. According to Tallberg, this is the “true power of the chair” (2003a, 25). It is of particular importance as a form of influence where the time elapsing from an issue’s inclusion on the agenda to actual decisions is extensive. The chair’s emphasizing and de-emphasizing of alternative issues and domains sets the pace in the handling of individual dossiers and shape the policy progress during the chairmanship period.

The chairmanship structures the agenda in accordance with national preferences along three key dimensions (Tallberg 2003a, 26). First, (1) *regional priorities* play a part in defining their preferences, through geographical and historical affinities. The state tends to prioritize their near abroad when shaping the agenda. Secondly, the chairs vary in their (2) *socio-economic priorities*. They vary in the relative importance they attach to broad issues like economic,

social and environmental policy. The priorities they choose are often related to the government's own policies, how they previously have emphasized areas in their domestic and foreign policies. Thirdly, chairmen tend to vary in their (3) *constitutional priorities*. This term deals with the state's policies related to institutional reform and enlargement, and suggests that they will pursue this also when serving as a chair.

The chairmanship agenda gives the best overall view on the relative emphasis the state holding the position put to issues along the three dimensions mentioned above. The tools it can use to reach its goals are of technical and procedural character (Tallberg 2003a, 28). Following this line of thought, Sherrington (2000) stresses the Presidency's capacity to determine the frequency of meeting within a policy area as a prominent source of agenda influence. Tallberg describes the ministerial meetings as hard cases in this regard, because at this level, the meeting schedule is more institutionalized than at the level of the working groups. Secondly, the chair may convene informal meetings at all levels of the institution. Such meetings can be used in a regular manner to push for progress in the prioritized regional, socio-economic and constitutional domains (Tallberg 2003a, 27). Thirdly, the chair can structure the meeting agendas, and thereby decide which issues that should be included on the agenda, and which items should be prioritized or not.

2.4.3 Agenda-exclusion

The possibility to put issues on the top of the agenda also provides the chairmanship with the option to leave things out of the agenda. According to Tallberg, the exclusion of issues is a feature of the chairmanship position that has been largely unexplored in the literature on chairmanships (2003a, 28). One should therefore pay as much attention to the exclusion of issues as the introduction of new concerns, even if this represents a difficult challenge methodologically. An exclusion is by definition a non-decision, which might not be observable for an outsider looking in. Bachrach and Baratz' observation from the early 1960s is still valid, and much researched later: Non-decision making is equally important to what is prioritized through the agenda-setting, and should be given just as much attention (Bachrach and Baratz 1962, 1963, 632). There are three ways that the presidency can engage in agenda-exclusion. The first is to (1) *remain silent on an area* (that might be considered as a problem by others). Secondly, the presidency can use its procedural control and (2) *exclude items from*

the agenda. This might happen at a working group level, or at the ministerial level. Furthermore, the chairmanship can stall the process in certain areas by not picking up a dossier during its period. This type of manipulation may not be perceived positively by the other member states, but complaints will typically be dismissed quite easily - by emphasizing the other issues that deserves prime attention (2003a, 29). Thirdly, the chair might want to *defer the decision* until the new chair is in place due to for example domestic political reasons (not wanting to be associated with the likely outcome) or for strategic reasons (more legitimate to block decisions when not having neutrality constraints as in the chairman position).

2.5 Operationalization and limitations

An inherent assumption in Tallberg's conceptualization is that the state holding the chairmanship position has decision-making power. The framework has previously been used for the Presidency in the European Union (EU). This position entails some key differences from the chairmanship position in the Arctic Council. The EU is a decision-making body, the Presidency is equipped with decision-making power, and the position rotates every six months between the 28 member states. The Arctic Council is not a decision-making body, but a 'high level forum', where cooperation is based on soft law and voluntariness by the members of the Council when it comes to following up on initiatives taken within the framework of the Council. There are two reasons why these institutional differences create a need for de-emphasizing a part of Tallberg's framework. Firstly, Tallberg draws on theories on bargaining and decision-making to present different negotiating strategies states can use to attain their goals (Tallberg 2003b). As mentioned in section 2.2, the possibility for negotiation failure creates a need for brokerage. It is therefore a rationale for the other states to share information about their private preferences with the chairmanship in a negotiating setting. In turn, this provides the chair with privileged information in its role as a broker.

Firstly, it will be difficult to make assumptions on whether Norway or Canada followed different negotiator strategies throughout their period as chair, due to the limited data material available, both primary and secondary sources. Secondly, if the chairmanship function as a mediator with asymmetrical control over the negotiations, this is probably more visible in institutions where the negotiating process ends up in a decision that applies for all

member states. However, in a unanimity rule, the member states know that the Arctic Council cannot implement rules they disagree on, because they would have to approve them first. Furthermore, even if the Council is characterized by negotiation processes, the need for brokerage and different negotiating strategies still might not be as manifested in the available material as it would be in the study of the Presidency of the EU. Therefore, I have de-emphasized the elements relating to the chairmanships function as a broker.

Thus, I present a modified part of Tallberg's model, which looks in-depth at the influence of formal leaders and presents five power resources through which they can exert influence:

Agenda-shaping in a consensus-based regime

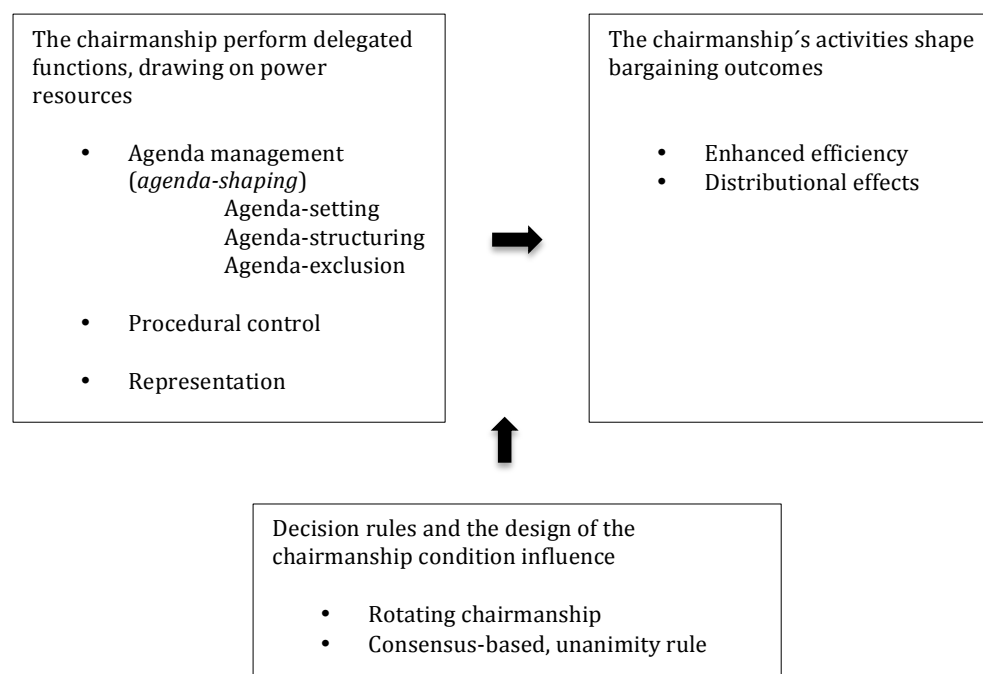


Figure 2. Agenda-shaping in a consensus-based regime.

I will investigate whether the states holding the chairmanship actually make use of these power resources, and if they do, in what way and to what extent they do it.

3 Method and Research Design

The research design is the strategy and structure of how a researcher intends to answer his or her research question.⁸ In this chapter, I will present and discuss the qualitative research design I use to answer the question of whether the agenda-shaping power as described by Tallberg can be used to shed light on how the chairmanship position in the Arctic Council is performed. First, I will explain why a qualitative case study is the most appropriate choice for this thesis. Secondly, I will describe the process of selecting cases to answer my research question, and discuss the possibilities for generalization of my findings. Thirdly, I will go through how I collected the data material. The data collection is based on method triangulation as described by Tansey (2007), mainly based on semi-structured interviews, official documents, and meeting documents from the Arctic Council.⁹ I will then provide a description of how the interviews were sampled, conducted and analyzed. To conclude, I examine the strengths and weaknesses of my research design in light of reliability and validity.

3.1 Qualitative research design

The objective of qualitative research is to provide in-depth information on a smaller selection of units (Thagaard 2009, 13–17). Research questions that fall under the umbrella of qualitative research often seek to reach the meaning behind general phenomena. Qualitative research therefore differs from the quantitative based research, which deals with broad, numerical generalizations. Since my objective is to understand the chairmanship position of the Arctic Council, the answer needs to be based on an in-depth analysis of how the states actually use the position. Hence, it is natural to seek information from the people who were involved in the chairmanship periods. This knowledge has to be obtained through research interviews. A priority has therefore been to speak to high governmental officials who were directly involved in the planning and carrying out of the chairmanship. The reason why I

⁸ Gerring defines research design as “the way in which empirical evidence is brought to bear on a hypothesis” (Gerring 2007, 216).

⁹ The meeting documents used in this thesis are available at the Arctic Council’s web page (Arctic Council 2011b).

need to rely on interviews to answer my research question is partly due to the limited amount on secondary literature on this area. There are some news coverage, but almost no research literature on the chairmanship position of the Arctic Council per se, nor on the Norwegian and Canadian chairmanship period. I have therefore to a large extent relied on first hand sources. I could have conducted a quantitative analysis of official documents and meeting minutes, but I quickly found that this would give me a too narrow foundation to answer my research question. Additionally, the number of meeting documents that are available to me would not be sufficient data material. Consequently, to be able to answer my research question thoroughly, I needed to base the analysis on a qualitative approach.

3.2 Case selection

A case is a phenomenon limited in space and time (Gerring 2007, 19). Inherent in the term *case* is the comprehension that it relates to, or represents a larger set of cases. According to George and Bennett, a case is “an instance of a class of events” that refers to a phenomenon of interest (George and Bennett 2005, 17). The case study can therefore be defined as a “(...) detailed examination of an aspect of a historical episode to develop or test historical explanations that may be generalizable to other events”(2005, 5). In this thesis, the other events – or the population of cases - refer to the role performances of other member states of the Arctic Council acting as chairs for periods of two years through a rotating chairmanship cycle. More specifically, it is a study of which instruments are available for other member states holding the position. To understand a larger class of similar units or a population of cases, the researcher conducts in-depth analysis of one or more cases (Gerring 2007, 37). A better way to answer my research question would therefore be to study many chairmanship periods, but due to time limitations it was necessary to limit the analysis to only cover two case studies. Even though this weakens the possibility for generalization, I am able to study the cases of the Norwegian and Canadian chairmanship periods in more depth than I would have if I had chosen more cases, hence – to use the words of George and Bennet (2005, 31) – I have sacrificed parsimony but strengthened the explanatory richness.

In Elgström’s (2003) analysis of nine of the presidencies of the European Parliament, the authors of the different chapters are asked to use the same framework for their analysis. In this way, one can see how the chosen strategy – the country in charge’s agenda and policy

initiatives - will make use of the position in different ways. Hence, I found it to be useful to have more than one case, since I then could investigate aspects of the theoretical framework in a more fruitful manner than what would be possible with only one case. The analytical insight and the tools used in this thesis could therefore be useful for the study of other chairmanship periods of the Arctic Council.

When I had decided to limit the analysis to cover two chairmanship periods, the process of finding out which chairmanship periods I would analyze started. Tallberg's theory does not state any specifications for which organizations or institutions or at which policy level it covers. Hence, I chose the Arctic Council due to the global interest in the region, and the need to investigate the Arctic governance further. There were two issues of concern when choosing cases. The first was that it had to be close in time and space, since I knew I needed to talk to the people who had been involved in the chairmanship. Firstly, since government officials do change positions quite often, it could be a time consuming task to track people down this if it was several years since the chairmanship period found place. Moreover, to conduct in-depth analysis also involves having an access to details of what happened and why, and I was afraid to go so far back that even the people working with the chairmanship didn't remember everything clearly.

Therefore, I needed the chairmanship periods to be close in time, and preferably also as close in space as possible, because this would make interviews easier to conduct in a reliable manner. The second issue is that there is often a geographical division between the eight Arctic member states. The Arctic Ocean coastal states are often referred to as the "Arctic five", and comprise of Norway, Denmark, the Russian Federation, Canada and the US. Since the five coastal states are endowed with sovereign rights to regulate and exploit natural resources in the water masses, the seabed and the subsoil for their exclusive economic zones (EEZ), they have a particular power and legitimacy in any governance process pertaining to the Arctic (Stokke 2014, 772–773). Based on the assumption that Arctic coastal states have higher stakes in region that it is concerned with preserving through international cooperation, I decided to narrow the scope of possible choices down to these five Arctic coastal states. When bearing these two concerns in mind, the Norwegian chairmanship period is close both in space and time, and the Canadian chairmanship period is close in time. I could have chosen for example the Danish chairmanship period (from 2011-2013), but the Scandinavian

countries in 2006 decided to enter into a common, overarching chairmanship cooperation. This would probably weaken the analytical fruitfulness when I only conduct two in-depth studies. However, this chairmanship cooperation represents an analytically important feature, since it shows how states can shape the chairmanship position. There is one implication with choosing the Canadian chairmanship period, and that is that it lasted until April 2015, which entails that the period is just over before the study is. A disadvantage when studying ongoing phenomena is that the researcher might not be able to see the full picture, because this might not emerge till later. Furthermore, the interviewees might share less or withhold information due to ongoing planning or strategies. This was something I bore in mind while conducting interviews. However, in the study of chairmanships, with a clear lack of secondary literature on the field, I argue that is actually an advantage to be able to speak to informants that are fully updated on the events being investigated. Furthermore, I argue that my main focus of study is the agenda-shaping efforts done by the state in charge, and this was presented when Canada took over the chairmanship in 2013. The ministerial meeting that marked the end of the Canadian chairmanship was in the end of April, so I managed to follow the chairmanship closely throughout its last year. Hence, I've had a clear advantage in the fact that people involved pay great attention to the chairmanship period that is ongoing, and that I have managed to gather more information than I probably would if the chairmanship period took place years ago.

3.3 Data collection

3.3.1 Semi-structured interviews

A semi-structured interview is a thematic or topic-centered dialogue between two or more participants, where the researcher has topics, themes or issues he or she wish to cover with a fluid and flexible structure (Edwards 2013, 3). Interviews provide information on understandings, opinions, attitudes and what people remember doing, and are therefore often used by political scientists to study political behavior inside and outside political institutions, with the aim of reconstructing the narrative of an event (Vromen 2010, 258). When studying the chairmanship period of the Arctic Council, I was first and foremost seeking the people who had previously or were, during the time of the study, working with the chairmanship.

These people fall under the category of elite interviewing, as they are usually high governmental officials, working within the foreign ministry of either Norway or Canada.

Interviewees

Random probability sampling is seen as the norm to which qualitative sampling should seek to resemble. But even in quantitative research, probability samples are rarely achieved. Here, I have used the non-probability sampling method of purposive sampling. In purposive sampling, it is the study's purpose and the researcher's knowledge of the population that guides the process (Tansey 2007, 770). This approach gives the researchers control over the selection process, and also makes sure that informants that are important for the research are not left out - as they would have been through probability sampling. The disadvantages with this sampling method is the risk of selection bias and that the potential for generalization is weakened (Tansey 2007, 769). My main concern, however, was that it would be easier for me to get in touch with informants from Norway, and that this could create an unbalance in the number of informants in the two cases. Nonetheless, since the Canadian government established the Canadian International Centre for the Arctic region (CICAR) in Oslo in 2009, Canadian government officials with expert knowledge of the Arctic region were actually placed in Norway (Government of Canada 2013b).

My strategy for choosing respondents was to gain as much information as possible from people who knew about the Arctic Council or the Norwegian or Canadian Arctic policy. I was able to participate at the Arctic Circle Conference, which is held annually in Reykjavik in Iceland in November 2014. Here, I managed to interview professor Petra Dolata from the University of Calgary and Heather Exner-Pirot from the University of Saskatchewan, who both have followed the Canadian chairmanship period closely, and also studied Canadian Arctic policy. These background interviews provided me with key knowledge and overview before I started on conducting interviews with people closely connected to the respective chairmanship periods.

In addition to using the non-probability method for finding informants, I used the method of snowballing throughout the process. This type of sample describes the way you receive information about other relevant actors that can function as informants by asking your first interviewees and others about people of interest. This has been an integrated part of my

approach in every interview I've conducted. Therefore, it was difficult for me to decide upon my sample size before I started doing interviews. It is a dynamic process, and it is also a characteristic of qualitative research that the number of informants is built as the research progresses (Edwards 2013, 7). According to Edwards, the researcher should continue her sampling and identifying cases until their interviewees are not telling anything they have not heard before. This can be a difficult goal to follow, especially since the project has practical limitations, like time. It is therefore important to keep in mind that the degree of meaning is more important than the number of conducted interviews, and that this should guide the number of informants (Edwards 2013, 66). My informants are therefore either government officials, or researchers who study Canadian or Norwegian Arctic policy.¹⁰

Interview guide

Interviewing allows respondents to talk freely and without the constraint of having to answer to fixed categories, as in surveys. It is therefore important that the researcher encourages free talk, and one way to do this is through asking open-ended questions. In addition to this, I started all my questions with phrases like: "From your perspective ..." and "In your opinion, ...", which encouraged the respondent to give an honest answer based on their own opinion as individuals working with the chairmanship, and not a state representative. I did not want the informants to feel that they did not have enough knowledge on an area to answer. Through this approach, one can gather rich detail about key elites' thoughts and attitudes on central issues (Aberbach and Rockman 2002, 673; Tansey 2007, 766).

By conducting interviews, and in particular elite interviews, the researcher can gain insight into the decisions and actions that lay behind an event or series of events. On this basis, the research may be able to reconstruct political episodes and form a broader picture of a complex phenomenon (Tansey 2007, 767). My goal with the interviews was to shed light on issues that are not clear in written sources. This is particularly important when analyzing the chairmanship periods, because the research literature of it is not extensive. Also, most of the Arctic Council documents, news articles and other sources discuss decisions that already have been made, and do not elaborate on the decision making process in itself. It was therefore a necessity to conduct interviews. The goal is that the interviews will provide new

¹⁰ A complete list of the informants, their titles and the date of the interview can be found in Appendix 1.

information that will add to the current state of knowledge (Davies 2001). The interview guide is enclosed in Appendix 2.

Conducting the interviews

The research interviews were conducted from the beginning of October until April (see Appendix 1 for detailed information). I have conducted eleven interviews, mostly of government officials, but also researchers. The length of the interviews was approximately one hour. All of my informants were contacted by e-mail, where I accounted for the purpose of the thesis and asked them for a research interview. All of the respondents that were located in Oslo wanted to do the interviews in their own work place, and therefore the interviews were either located in meeting rooms, the informant's own office or in the canteen of the workplace. Before starting the interviews, I first reiterated the purpose of my thesis and what I was studying. I then informed them about the consent and the possibility to withdraw at any point. All of my informants except one agreed to be placed with name and position in the enclosed lists of respondents, but they all wanted to approve the quotes I wished to use before the research was published.

Following several advices, I chose not to use a recorder under the interviews. The reason was that I wanted to encourage a free conversation with the informant. My experience is that this contributed to create an environment where the informant felt safe and that they could speak freely. Even though made it difficult to transcribe the interviews verbatim, I took careful notes under the interviews, and straight after the interviews I noted down what the respondent had told me in full sentences. Then I wrote out a final copy of the interview on the computer, in addition to some of my immediate thoughts I had after the interview. The decision of not using a voice recorder weakens the reliability of my data, since the interview notes not could be transcribed fully verbatim. However, if it should be necessary to trace the interview data in detail, the interview notes can be provided by approval of the informant(s). The interviews with people that were not located in Oslo (except the interviews conducted in Reykjavik) were done over telephone.

Additionally, since my thesis contained contact information of my respondents, the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD) has approved the project following the rules and ethical concerns for conducting research in Norway.

3.3.2 Other sources of information

The information gathered through interviews does not constitute the only data source in this thesis. Information gathered from interview data are rarely considered in isolation, and the goal of collecting such data is often to confirm information that has already been collected from other sources (Tansey 2007, 766). As briefly mentioned earlier, it is important to check the information gathered through the interviews, due to possible errors like unbalanced information or memory loss. I therefore treat the interviews as a supplement to the written sources used in this thesis. As a researcher, I try to reach the goal of *method triangulation*, where collected data are cross-checked through multiple sources to increase the findings robustness and credibility (Tansey 2007, 766). The study is therefore based on a selection of primary sources; official documents on Norwegian Arctic policy and Canadian Arctic policy,¹¹ Arctic Council meeting documents, declarations and reports available at the Council's website (Arctic Council 2011b). In addition, I review secondary literature as research literature on the field and media articles.

3.4 Research Quality: Validity and Reliability

How well the criterion of reliability is met depends on how credible and accurate the data collection is treated by the researcher. Here, I will first discuss the validity of my data and the way it is used, and in the second section, I will describe my efforts related to increase the reliability of the study.

Validity refers to the correlation between the theoretical definition of a variable and the operational definition, which controls the data collection (Hellevik 2007, 177, 289). One usually divides between external and internal validity. While *external validity* concerns the possibility for generalization to a larger population, *internal validity* deals with how well the match between the researcher's observations and the theoretical ideas they develop is. When

¹¹ In the analysis of the Norwegian chairmanship period: *The Norwegian Governments High North Strategy* (2006), *New Building Blocks in the North* (2009), and *The High North: Vision and Strategies* (2011). In the analysis on the Canadian chairmanship period: *Canada's Northern Strategy: Our North, Our Heritage, Our Future* (2009), *Achievements under Canada's Northern Strategy, 2007-2011* (2011), and *Statement on Canada's Arctic Policy* (2010).

conducting a qualitative case study, one aims at developing or testing explanations that may be generalizable to other events (George and Bennett 2005, 5). Previously, I have stated that the population, or class of events, in study refers to the other member states of the Arctic Council. But my findings cannot be generalized and claimed to be valid for all eight Arctic Council member states. However, following Bryman (2012), it is the quality of the theoretical inferences that are made out of qualitative data that is crucial to the assessment of generalization. The theoretical inferences made in this study will contribute to the research conducted on the chairmanship position, and the degree of agenda-shaping power that lies in this role in the Arctic Council. Furthermore, one can see whether institutional differences create a different scope of action for the state in the chairmanship position. This is however not the main task of this thesis, as I first and foremost assume that Tallberg's theoretical framework, in a modified version, can be a fruitful way of analyzing the chairmanship position in the Arctic Council.

Internal validity is described by Gerring (2007, 19) as the virtue of case study research. Political analysis demands clear and consistent use of key terms (Østerud 2007). As a researcher, I am aware of the importance of showing precaution in how I understand and analyze the empirical data, and the importance of critically assessing my interpretation of the data material. I have therefore strived to confirm my interpretations by other sources when this has been possible. In this manner, the method of triangulation strengthens the credibility of the findings (Bryman 2004, 275). According to King, Keohane and Verba, the most important rule for all data collection "is to report how the data were created and how (one) came to possess them" (1994, 51). When using a qualitative approach, it is especially important to be transparent about the data collection.

The term *reliability* refers to the degree to which a study can be replicated (Bryman 2004, 273). This is a criterion that is harder to meet for a researcher doing qualitative science than one conducting quantitative or statistical research, because it is inherently impossible to replicate qualitative interviews (Edwards 2013, 92). Quantitative research draws on a sample of agreed criteria from a statistically defined population, and then generalizes from the findings from that sample to a larger population. Thus, the researcher should seek to make the research process as transparent as possible, being both rigorous and systematic in the treatment of the data, and most importantly practice reflexivity in taking into account the

potential and actual effects of other factors in the analysis (Edwards 2013, 92). It is therefore important to show that the method being used in this thesis constitutes a plausible way to answer my research question. I have also tried to shape the research design in this thesis so that it strives to counteract the disadvantage of weakened reliability. Here, I have accounted for how the data has been developed, and I've tried to make the operationalization of Tallberg's conceptualization as clear as possible before testing it on the empirical material.

4 Agenda-shaping in an Arctic Council context

In this chapter, I will first describe the establishment of the Arctic Council in 1991, and present the backdrop for the Arctic Council we know today. Then, I will discuss whether the Arctic Council during the past decade have moved from being a high level forum to an international organization, based on the comprehensive scientific reports delivered by its working groups, the international agreements that has been made in the Council the last couple of years its inclusion of the indigenous peoples organizations in the Arctic region, the rush of observer states, and the establishment of a permanent secretariat in Tromsø, Norway. Lastly, I will go through the institutional framework for the chairmanship position in the Council, and try to identify some possibilities and limitations within this role.

4.1 From the AEPS to the Arctic Council

The Arctic Council is an outgrowth of the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS), which was created in 1991 on the initiative of Finland. The goal with AEPS was to start a process to address Arctic-wide environmental issues, as the end of the Cold War created a renewed optimism related to the opportunities for cooperation in the Arctic (Bloom 1999, 713; Young 2005, 9). Eight Arctic states decided to participate: Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the United States (US). Among the eight states, geography divides the “ocean five” from the “non-littoral three” (Griffiths 2011, 191). The Arctic Ocean coastal states are often referred to as the “Arctic five”, and comprise of Norway, Denmark, the Russian Federation, Canada and the US. Along with a Declaration on the Protection of the Arctic Environment, the AEPS was approved by all eight Arctic ministers at Rovaniemi, Finland in June 1991 as a political – but not a legal – commitment to establish a more comprehensive structure for cooperation. The AEPS identified several key objectives, e.g. protecting the Arctic ecosystem, sustainable utilization of natural resources, to recognize the indigenous peoples as determined by themselves. Four working groups were established under the AEPS: The Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program (AMAP), the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF), the Emergency Prevention, Preparedness

and Response (EPPR) and the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME). However, some states thought the AEPS were too limited, and that it didn't include important aspects regarding the Arctic region. Since the last eighties and until 1995, Canada in particular advocated for the establishment of an Arctic Council to go beyond the existing AEPS, and broaden its mandate to also handle "a wide range of environmental, economic development and maritime policy issues" (Bloom 1999, 714). However, some states had difficulty with the notion of creating what some viewed as a new international organization. Both the United States and Russia resisted all efforts to provide the Arctic Council with decision making authority of any kind (Young 2009, 76). The US insisted "(...) that the declaration establishing the council take the form of soft law, emphasizing the refusal to provide the council with any regulatory authority, specifying that any and all issues pertaining to military security are off limits for the council, and refusing to equip the council with a secretariat and material resources on its own" (Young 2009, 79). To gain acceptance from all eight states, it was therefore necessary to impose sharp limits on the Councils mandate. Still, all the Arctic states wanted to ensure that the developments in the Arctic would be driven by the concerns of national governments, and this was a motivation for reaching consensus (Stokke and Hønneland 2006; Young 2009, 79).

Therefore, in 1996, the Arctic ministers signed the Ottawa Declaration on the Establishment of the Arctic Council. The Council's official mandate was to continue and strengthen the work of its forerunner, the AEPS. The new Council would "provide a means for promoting cooperation, coordination and interaction among the Arctic states, with the involvement of the Arctic indigenous communities and other Arctic inhabitants on common Arctic issues, in particular issues of sustainable development and environmental protection in the Arctic", in addition to coordinate programs established under the AEPS's working groups (Arctic Council 1996). The Declaration also states that the Council "should not deal with matters related to military security", as required by the US and Russia.

During the following two years, the Arctic states and permanent participants worked on rules of procedure and terms of reference for a sustainable development program, as well as new mandates for the Council's programs. At the Arctic Council's inaugural ministerial meeting in Iqaluit, Canada in 1998, these rules, terms of reference and mandates were approved by the Arctic Ministers (Arctic Council 1998). The highest level of interaction within the Council

occurs at the biannual meetings between the Arctic ministers. In between those occasions, the work of the council is directed by the senior arctic officials (SAOs), usually high governmental officials from each member state, in consultation with representatives of the permanent participants (Bloom 1999, 718). The SAOs oversee the work of the Council's subsidiary bodies, the working groups and task forces. The Rules of Procedure as they were approved in the Iqaluit Declaration determines that all cooperative activities must be pursuant to a ministerial mandate created at the biennial ministerial meetings, and also specify how meetings are run and how decisions are taken. According to Bloom (1999), these rules are relatively lengthy and detailed framework for cooperation for an informal body with no legal authority. The ministerial declarations have a weak legal status since they are not regulatory in nature or empowered with the authority to make binding decisions (Young 2005, 10).

As stated in the Ottawa Declaration, there are no overarching rules for funding; it is not required of the member states to provide contributions for funding projects within the Council. As a consequence, not all states give money to all projects, as the project and initiatives are funded voluntarily by individual Arctic states. Therefore, it is the states themselves propose projects or choose working groups they want to support. This has resulted in for example that Norway pays for the secretariat for the working group AMAP, Iceland pays for PAME, and the United States and Iceland for CAFF (Bloom 1999, 719). Consequently, a possible vulnerability with this financial system is that the funding may not be provided in a stable and coherent way. If a state loses support within its government for a particular effort, or funds are not made available by legislative authorities, funding to projects or initiatives are easily terminated without any legal consequence (Bloom 1999, 721).

Due to the sharp limits on the Council's mandate that was needed to gain acceptance from all member states, the resulting Ottawa Declaration is in Young's words a relatively toothless agreement. It "(...) lacks the authority to make decisions and the resources needed to initiate and carry out projects on its own" (Young 2009, 79). The declaration contains no rules governing the actions of its members, and it does not envision the council as a body with the authority to make formal decisions about significant issues of governance (Young 2005, 4). In other words, the Arctic Council is designed for policy-shaping and not policy-making (Bloom 1999, 716). The first decade of the Arctic Council, it was argued by many that the Council had severe institutional limitations. According to Young, the Council is known for

featuring a mosaic of issue-specific agreements rather than a single comprehensive and integrated regime covering an array of issues that constitute the region's policy agenda.¹² That the Arctic Council is based on ministerial declarations rather than on conventions and treaties makes its legal status relatively weak (Rothwell 1996). All outcomes require consensus in the Arctic Council, based on a careful process of vetting of proposals and acceptance by all member states. For the member states, the requirement of consensus prevents them from having to impose policies that they disagree on (Bloom 1999, 722). Decisions of working groups, task forces or other subsidiary bodies may be adopted by consensus if all Arctic states are present. Also, discussions and decisions at meetings shall not occur on any other matter than what have already been included in the meeting agenda (Arctic Council 2013a).

4.2 From a high level forum to an international organization?

Despite the institutional limitations of the Council, and the weak prognoses it received regarding its role as a policy shaper when established back in 1996, the Arctic Council has managed to prove its critics wrong. Even though the institutional rules still rests on the Ottawa Declaration,¹³ the Council has managed to develop into the main international forum for Arctic politics. The Arctic Council plays a key role in the making of Arctic governance through its reports, declarations, public statement, official website and press releases (Dodds 2013, 11). However, the Arctic Council does not work in a vacuum, but works alongside other organizations with interest in the Arctic region, like NATO, Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC), the Nordic Council and the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (Dodds 2013, 8). These organizations and forums deal with for example geopolitical strategies, regional cooperation, environmental protection, and military activity. Nonetheless, the Arctic Council is still the central arena for interstate relations in the Arctic, due to it's gathering of sovereign states, indigenous peoples organizations and observers including Britain, China and the European

¹² Several scholars have argued against the need for a more formal, integrated, and overarching agreement in the Arctic. See e.g. Young 2009, 2011; Stokke and Hønneland 2006; Stokke 2010.

¹³ Which was last revised at the ministerial meeting in Kiruna, Sweden in May 2013.

Union.¹⁴ Since the turn of the century, the Arctic Council has experienced increased international attention with the Arctic moving up on the international agenda; mainly due to the consequences climate change has on the region (Bekkevold and Offerdal 2014, 827).

The working groups

Following its mandate from 1996, the Council has primarily been engaged in scientific work and assessments aimed at documenting challenges and opportunities in the region, with the intention of providing policy recommendations. Since its origin, the Council and its underlying working groups have managed to create a number of successes. Several scientific reports have managed to set the policy agenda in the Arctic and frame issues for consideration at the policy level (Young 2009, 79). From its earlier limited focus on environmental protection with the AEPS, the Council has managed to create and involve a discourse of sustainable development, and be a pioneer in the inclusion of indigenous peoples, non-state actors, and also global actors that have an interest in the Arctic (Young 2009, 79). The Arctic Council's work has hence played an important role in rising Arctic issues on the policy agenda and in enlightening the general public (Young 2005, 11).

The Council is now made up of six working groups which lead its various projects and activities: The Arctic Contaminants Action Programme (ACAP), the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program (AMAP), the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF), the Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response (EPPR), the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME) and the sustainable development working group (SDWG) (Arctic Council 2012). The working groups have delivered comprehensive and authoritative scientific accounts of what is happening in the Arctic, for example through the two reports the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA) and the Arctic Human Development Report (ADHR) from 2004. Even though these reports do not involve the regulatory and procedural roles we typically associate with the operation of international regimes, these reports have played a role both in framing and in highlighting issues on the Arctic agenda (Young 2005, 4).

¹⁴ Both China and Britain has received full observer status. The EU is an ad hoc observer, which I will come back to under the section about observer states to the Arctic Council later in this chapter.

The legally binding agreements

At the ministerial meeting in Nuuk, Greenland in May 2011, the Arctic states approved the Search and Rescue Agreement (SAR), which is the first legally binding agreement that has been negotiated under the auspices of the Arctic Council (Sellheim 2012, 61). At the next ministerial meeting in Kiruna, Sweden in May 2013, the Arctic states adopted the Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response in the Arctic. That the Arctic Council now can be held legally accountable for its actions is a great shift from its mandate from 1996 as described in the Ottawa Declaration. These agreements signalizes that the Council has developed into an international organization rather than being a forum for scientific cooperation. However, Keil (2014) argues that it is important to underline that the Council is not a legal entity, and that the agreements are intergovernmental state agreements negotiated by sovereign states based on national jurisdiction, while the Council still only functions as a forum for consultations. Kao et al. (2012) argues that even though the adoption of the SAR-agreement represents a new approach for the Arctic states to deal with the challenges facing the region, it does not imply that a legally-binding instrument is necessarily preferable for every issue. Furthermore, Stokke (2007) argues that an overarching, legally binding Arctic environmental regime, inspired by the one already existing for the Antarctic, would not enhance the current work of the Arctic Council. The Council have already managed to strengthen the environmental governance in the region by (1) improving the knowledge base; (2) preparing practical guidance on risk reduction; (3) highlighting in broader regulatory for a the Arctic dimension of problems like long-range transported hazardous compounds; and (4) supporting the capacity of Arctic states to implement existing commitments (Stokke 2007).

The rush of observers

Since its origin, the Arctic Council has been open for observer states. From the evolvement of the AEPS, non-Arctic actors was viewed as important mainly due to the acknowledgement that the environmental concerns seen in the Arctic was mostly caused below the Arctic Circle (Graczyk 2011, 587). There was a common understanding that one needed to include other actors to be able to combat the consequences of climate change. The states agreed to a limited participation of observers, which would shape and determine the status of the observers when the Arctic Council was established. The general rule for participation of non-arctic actors they should contribute to the Council's work (Graczyk 2011, 594).

According to the Ottawa Declaration, observer status is open to non-arctic states, inter-governmental and inter-parliamentary organizations, and non-governmental organizations. There exists no clear criterion for admitting new observers, so acceptance is based on the member states' evaluation of their application. Italy and China were the first non-northern states that applied for observer status in 2007. However, their applications were rejected because they did not meet the requirements. Nevertheless, they were accepted as ad hoc observers to the SAO and working group meetings. This implied that they had to formally apply each time they wanted to participate in any meeting, until a final decision was being made at the next ministerial meeting in Tromsø, Norway in 2009. Within this period, both South Korea and the European Commission applied for observer status. At the ministerial meeting in Tromsø, which marked the end of the Norwegian chairmanship period (2006-2009), none of the four applicants were accepted as permanent observers. This entailed that the only authorized way the observers could express their positions during meetings, was by delivering statements that needed to be accepted and put into the formal meeting agenda. The rejection of the EU's application was explained with the Canadian objection due to the EU's preparations to ban products derived from the commercial seal hunt. This legislation was approved by the European Council in July 2009, and affected indigenous peoples in Canada, Norway and Russia, who have been hunting seal for centuries (Graczyk 2011, 608). This decision was particularly debated afterwards, partly because three Arctic member states are members of the EU, and all permanent state observers are EU members.

So far, twelve non-Arctic states have been admitted as observers to the Arctic Council, in addition to nine intergovernmental organizations, and eleven non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The twelve observers are France, Germany, Netherland, Poland, Spain, United Kingdom, China, Italy, Japan, Korea, Singapore and India. The status is being automatically extended in every two years as chairmanship rotates among the Arctic states. The observers can participate in all listed activities of the Council, such as be present at the ministerial meetings and SAO meetings, delegate scientists to the working groups, task forces or project and deliver any proposition or document to consideration of the Arctic Council participants (Graczyk 2011, 609). Still, the role of observers in the Arctic Council is not completely clear. The global interest the Council has been receiving has sparked debates about the role of the

observers, how many observers that should be included,¹⁵ and what consequences it has for the Arctic region. This is increasingly important for the Council since the applicants are powerful entities like the EU and China, and other economically strong states such as Italy, Japan and South Korea.

The indigenous people's organizations

A major achievement of the Arctic Council is the way it has included organizations of indigenous peoples in the Arctic. Before the establishment of the Council, it was the Canadian government that managed to include participation of northern indigenous peoples as permanent participants in the AEPS (Huebert 2014, 3). When establishing the Council, the membership category permanent participants were created to provide for active participation and full consultation with the Arctic indigenous peoples within the Arctic Council (Arctic Council 2012). In addition to the eight permanent members, six permanent participant organizations represent the indigenous people of the north: The Aleut International Association (AIA), the Arctic Athabaskan Council (AAC), the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC), the Gwich'in Council International (GCI), the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia and Far East (RAIPON), and the Saami Council (SC). According to Young, this is a success story that will be emulated in other parts of the world. The roles that non-state actors play constitute important elements in the tapestry of transboundary cooperation in the circumpolar north (Young 2009, 76). The Council does not only present an opportunity for the indigenous groups to express their views to and seek support from the Council, but is also an arena for dialogue between the groups and their respective governments. In some cases, this relationship has historically proven difficult for domestic reasons (Bloom 1999, 717). According to Bloom, the participation of indigenous population fosters particularly positive international and domestic interactions.

The permanent secretariat in Tromsø

The permanent secretariat was established in January 2013 to strengthen the Council's capacity to respond to challenges and opportunities facing the Arctic (Arctic Council 2011d). The secretariat functions as an administrative body working under the chairmanship, to provide organizational and administrative support, enhanced communication and outreach,

¹⁵ According to the Ottawa Declaration (1996), the number of permanent participants should at any time be less than the number of members.

institutional memory, operational efficiency, finance, human resources, and other services required by the Council and its chair (Arctic Council Secretariat 2014, 4–5). These functions are important, because “the rapidly changing circumstances in the Arctic have increased the challenges and opportunities facing the Arctic in both volume and complexity” (Arctic Council 2011c). According to the Nuuk Declaration, the Arctic ministers decided to strengthen the capacity of the Arctic Council with the new secretariat for it to be better able to respond to the challenges and opportunities facing the Arctic.

4.3 The formal responsibilities of the chair

In accordance with Article 5 of the Ottawa declaration, the chairmanship of the Council rotates every two years between the eight member states. Prior to the conclusion of each biannual ministerial meeting, the Arctic states shall confirm the host of the next meeting. The chairmanship’s primary role is to coordinate joint projects and meetings between the member states, permanent participants and working groups (Arctic Council 2011a). According to the rules of procedure adopted at the ministerial meeting in Kiruna in May 2013, where Canada took over the chairmanship position from Sweden, the chairmanship shall consult with the other member states and permanent participants before it circulates a draft agenda for its chairmanship programme. This agenda should be sent out at least 90 days prior to the ministerial meeting. When there is 30 days until the meeting, the chairmanship has to circulate the revised draft agenda along with any explanatory or other documents (Arctic Council 2013a, 6). At the opening of each ministerial meeting, the agenda is adopted by the Arctic states during the opening session. Hence, the agenda for each chairmanship is being formally approved by all member states before it the chair enters its position. The agenda is therefore inherently dependent on approval in what is a feature of the consensus-based regime in the Council.

Between the ministerial meetings, the chairmanship is responsible for providing the chairperson for the SAO meetings, which has to be concurred by the Arctic states represented at the meetings. The chair for the SAOs is usually a high official from the host country’s ministry of foreign affairs. The SAOs usually meet at least twice yearly at the call of the chairmanship. They are responsible for the coordination, guiding and monitoring of the Council’s activities in accordance with the decisions and instructions of the Arctic Council.

They also receive and discuss reports from working groups, task forces and other subsidiary bodies of the Council (Arctic Council 2013a, 7). The work of the Arctic Council is conducted by the SAOs in consultation with permanent participants between the ministerial meetings (Arctic Council Secretariat 2014, 4). Furthermore, even though the working language of the Council is English, the chairmanship is responsible for making “reasonable efforts to provide for Russian interpretation at Ministerial and SAO meetings” (Arctic Council 2013a, 10). After the meeting, the chairmanship may release minutes, communications and documents of the meeting after obtaining approval from the relevant officials of each Arctic state. The chairmanship is responsible for preparing a report from the meeting, which will be formally released after it have been approved by the relevant officials of each Arctic state.

Furthermore, it is the chairmanship that receives applications related to observer status. Then, the chairmanship has to circulate a list of entities and their applications for observer status at least 120 days before the forthcoming ministerial meeting, where the applicants will be reviewed. Additionally, the chairmanship has to designate a point of contact for internal communication. It is also required to inform all the other member states, permanent participants and states granted observer status accordingly. The chairmanship is also responsible for representing the Arctic Council externally, and undertake communication on Arctic Council matters with other international for a as may be agreed to in advance by the Arctic states.

To summarize, in this chapter I have first described the establishment of the Arctic Council in 1991 (section 4.1). Then, I argued that the Arctic Council during the past decade have moved from being a high level forum to an international organization, based on the comprehensive scientific reports delivered by its working groups, the international agreements that has been made in the Council the last couple of years its inclusion of the indigenous peoples organizations in the Arctic region, the rush of observer states, and the establishment of a permanent secretariat in Tromsø (section 4.2). Lastly, I have presented the formal responsibilities of the chairmanship position in the Council (section 4.3).

5 The Norwegian chairmanship period: The long-term strategist

In the following section, I will briefly describe Norwegian priorities in the Arctic before they entered into the chairmanship position in 2006. Building on Tamnes (2011), I focus on three areas that are of particular interest for Norway in the Arctic: (i) To maintain a good relationship with Russia, (ii) to uphold sovereignty and exercise sovereignty in its ocean area, and (iii) to take care of Norway's economic interests in the north; the petroleum and maritime resources. The synopsis is based on a range of sources: The official documents *The Norwegian Governments High North Strategy* (2006), *New Building Blocks in the North* (2009), and *The High North: Vision and Strategies* (2011), in addition to research literature on the field and media articles and statements.

I will then proceed with the analysis of the Norwegian chairmanship period, which lasted from 2006 to 2009.

5.1 Norwegian Arctic policy

At the turn of the century, Norway was one of the first governments among the Arctic Council member states to respond to the changes in the Arctic. Awareness of the major climate change and the great petroleum potential in the Arctic gained momentum in Norway shortly after 2000. The reason was the alarming reports from the US Geological Survey (Bird et al. 2008), and the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment by the Arctic Council working group AMAP in 2004. Additionally, domestic factors contributed to the launching of a more ambitious High North policy. The announced High North strategy received strong public enthusiasm, and the High North “became *the* foreign policy issue of the autumn 2005 election campaign (Jensen and Hønneland 2011, 37).¹⁶ When the new center-left coalition won the election in the fall of 2005, the emphasis on the new policy in the north was seen as the winning card (Tamnes 2011, 58).

¹⁶ Italics as in the original quote.

In December 2006, the Norwegian government published its High North Strategy, which declared that the high north was on top of Norway's foreign policy agenda (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2006, 17). Three focal points were to improve relations with Russia, the management of marine resources and the Barents Sea as an energy province (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2006). The rise of the Arctic as a geostrategic arena created a notable shift in Norway's rhetorical framing of the term the "High North", which referred to the three northernmost counties in Norway; Nordland, Troms and Finnmark, in addition to the Norwegian seabed. According to Jensen and Hønneland (2011), the usage of the High North as a discursive and politically coherent concept grew fivefold between the 2000s and till 2004. Even though the distinction between the High North and the Arctic is often blurred, here, the term "High North" is defined as the Arctic area in Norway's vicinity.

(i) The relationship with Russia and NATO membership

It is crucial for Norway to have a good relationship with its neighbor Russia. High priority is given to promote stability, predictability and low tension between the two neighboring states. Since the end of the Cold war, there have been built bridges in a number of fields. Still, the bilateral relationship is of asymmetrical character, between a small state and an unpredictable great power. Norway's relation to Russia is the central bilateral dimension of the High North policy. The relationship to Russia is based on pragmatism, interests and cooperation (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2006, 18). Cooperation is important, especially on issues like health, safety, environmental issues, maritime safety, oil spill response and emergency. Although the two countries have many common interests in the Arctic, there are also conflicting views, especially with regard to the fisheries protection zone and the continental shelf around the Svalbard archipelago. A key issue for Norway is to uphold sovereignty and exercise authority over Svalbard, following the Svalbard Treaty of 1920, which recognizes Norway's full and absolute sovereignty over the archipelago (Tamnes 2011, 57). This has created some tensions with Russia, who perceives the rules and regulation of the archipelago as a deliberate effort by Norway to exclude them from having a bilateral relationship on Svalbard. However, the overall fishery management in the Barents Sea is managed jointly and successfully by Norway and Russia. In addition, defense cooperation between Norway and Russia is "building mutual trust and increasing our capacity for joint problem-solving" (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2006, 20). It is however still

important for Norway to balance the presence of its neighbor with a strong relationship with NATO, and also advocate for the importance of abiding international law and contribute to strengthen the cooperation in the Arctic region. The Arctic Council is thereby regarded by Norway as a body through which one could enhance cooperation among the Arctic states and include non-Arctic states and institutions (Hoel 2014, 84).

(ii) Maritime boundaries, sovereignty and soft security

Being a small state in Arctic military affairs, Norway has strong interest in enhancing the international legal regime in the region (Flikke 2011, 65). Norway has a long coastline bordering the Barents Sea in the north, which houses a major share of Norwegian fishery resources (Bekkevold and Offerdal 2014, 826). International law, especially the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), is key to the just distribution of rights and obligations. Currently, more than 160 countries are party to the treaty. All Arctic states except the United States have ratified it and are bound by its provisions. In 2009, Norway's continental shelf claim was approved. It is of great importance to Norway, as a significant coastal state with jurisdiction about two million square kilometers of sea and seabed, to further strengthen the international legal framework and international cooperation in the Arctic region.

Norway will exercise its authority in the region in a "credible, consistent and predictable way" (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2006, 7). It will continue to develop the presence of the armed forces, the police and the prosecuting authority, both to meet national security needs and maintain stability in the region. The goal of military presence in the north has inspired the Norwegian government to invest in a coast guard ice breaker five frigates, six missile torpedo boats, and fourteen helicopters for frigates and coast guard ships since 1990 (Tamnes 2011, 59). These investments are not only due to "hard" security issues, but also soft security considerations like protecting the ocean zone, e.g. the control of fishing boats, protect oil and gas infrastructure, and be prepared for possible oil spills and shipping accidents (Tamnes 2011, 59). Search and rescue and emergency response systems are an essential part of Norway's High North policy, especially since more than 80 percent of shipping in the Arctic passes through Norwegian waters (Bekkevold and Offerdal 2014, 827). Norway uses its armed forces to exercise sovereignty and authority in the high north, to provide background information for national decision-making through surveillance and

intelligence, in regards to natural resources, the environment and military developments. Thereby, the armed forces contribute to securing predictability and stability in the region (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2006, 19).

(iii) Petroleum and maritime resources and environmental concerns

In 2008, Norway was ranked as the world's sixth largest oil exporter and the eleventh largest oil producer, and also ranked as the second largest gas exporter in the world (Jensen, Jensen, and Vigeland Rottem 2011, 16). Although the total production of oil and gas is modest on a global scale, the production makes a difference abroad because most of it is exported (Tamnes 2011, 57). Norway was also the second-largest natural gas exporter in the world in 2008. Around 17 percent of the total petroleum resources and 30 percent of the undiscovered resources are probably in the Barents Sea. Norway will get 3.3 percent of the estimated total undiscovered resources in the Arctic. This creates a number of challenges related to protection of the Arctic environment, preservation of valuable renewable fish sources and the security of the petroleum infrastructure (Tamnes 2011, 58).

According to Jensen and Vigeland (2011, 16), the domestic debate concerning petroleum resources have since the 1990s been between "extraction and protection", debating the relationship between economic growth and environmental protection. The Norwegian government is however facing the challenging task of both holding the role as a credible steward and protector of the northern environment, while still earning money from extracting petroleum in the very same region (Jensen, Jensen, and Vigeland Rottem 2011, 18). The Norwegian government wants to play a leading role in dealing with climate change, especially when it comes to hazardous substances and the marine environment in the region, according to the High North Strategy (2006). To increase the scientific knowledge related to environmental management and utilization of resources in these areas is therefore a priority area (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2006, 16).

So far, I have presented the most important aspects of Norwegian High North policy, namely; (i) to maintain a good relationship with Russia, (ii) to uphold sovereignty and exercise sovereignty in its ocean area, and (iii) to secure Norway's economic interests in the north; the petroleum and maritime resources. I will now proceed to the analysis of the Norwegian chairmanship period in the Arctic Council, and see whether Norway made use of the agenda-

shaping powers they entail according to Tallberg, through agenda-setting (by (1) *raising awareness to certain issues*, (2) *develop concrete proposals for action*, and (3) *develop new institutional practices*), agenda-structuring (in accordance with the three key dimensions (1) *regional priorities*, (2) *socio-economic priorities*, and (3) *constitutional priorities*), and agenda-exclusion (by (1) *remaining silent on issues*, (2) *excluding items from the agenda* and/or (3) *defer decisions until the new chair is in place*).

5.2 Agenda-shaping in the Norwegian chairmanship period (2006-2009)

A group of high governmental officials from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs started planning the coming chairmanship period in the summer of 2005, a year before the takeover at the ministerial meeting in Salekhard, Russia in 2006, according to Karsten Klepsvik,¹⁷ who were the Norwegian ambassador to the Arctic Council from 2005 to 2010. As a part of the preparations, they started looking at the hitherto work of the Arctic Council, in addition to which priorities previous chairmanships had focused on. Through this preparation, they identified issues that had already been on the agenda the last couple of years, and also what they saw as previously unaddressed issues. After the assessment of the work of the Council followed an internal dialogue between other affected authorities: The Ministry of Climate and Environment, Ministry of Justice and Public Security, Ministry of Petroleum and Energy, Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries, and Ministry of Defense.¹⁸ In addition, the Saami Council was involved throughout the process. The dialogue with the concerned authorities was initiated in an attempt to map the Norwegian interests in the Arctic region.

5.2.1 Agenda-setting: The chairmanship agenda and new institutional practices

After discussions with related stakeholders in Norway, the following three priorities were

¹⁷ Telephone interview, 16.03.2015, Blindern, Oslo.

¹⁸ The latter, Ministry of Defense, was not contacted directly in relation to the chairmanship, but they were oriented (Klepsvik).

chosen by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs as the chairmanship agenda: Climate change, integrated ocean management, and improvement of the efficiency of the Arctic Council. To set the agenda is also the ability to (1) *raise awareness to certain issues*. The first issue on the agenda, climate change, were chosen because the Norwegian delegation thought that a focus on climate change were important due to the massive changes that the Arctic was and still is going through, and also that it was important to follow-up the findings from the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA) report from 2004. The second priority, to focus on integrated ocean management in vulnerable areas, was a concept that stemmed from the Norwegian government's national plan for parts of the Norwegian seabed. The Norwegian delegation thought that the other member states of the Arctic Council could take advantage of Norway's experience in this field. The third issue on the agenda, to strengthen the Arctic Council, was viewed as important due to the rising global interest in the region. I will discuss this point more thoroughly under agenda-structuring (5.2.2).

The creation of a joint Scandinavian chairmanship

A two year chairmanship can be a short time for many of the larger projects of the Council. Quite early in the preparations for its chairmanship Norway therefore invited Denmark and Sweden to cooperate for a six year consecutive Norwegian-Danish-Swedish chairmanship period (Norwegian MFA official Stein Rosenberg).¹⁹ To create a joint Scandinavian chairmanship period would secure a long-term perspective for the plans they had for the chairmanship. Consequently, both the Swedes and the Danes were positive to the idea, and a Scandinavian, common chairmanship was therefore established. Together they created an umbrella-document that would function as the superior document for all three chairmanship periods, but it was agreed that the three countries would have their own agenda in addition to the overarching, Scandinavian agenda. In Tallberg's threefold agenda-setting concept, this could be viewed as an example of the third element, (3) *to develop new institutional practices*. This represented a new way to think about the chairmanship role, and one took what many would say is a short period of time to implement one's own agenda, and turned it into a long-term period. Since Denmark and Sweden at this point probably hadn't got very far in preparing for their chairmanship periods, Norway created a draft agenda, which the other Scandinavian countries approved. This is a new way of interpreting the chairmanship role,

¹⁹ Rosenberg worked as a polar advisor in the Norwegian MFA from 2002 to 2012. Interview 30.01.2015, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Oslo, Norway.

and shows that Norway maneuvered the position into something that is not covered by the formal responsibilities of the chair, as presented in chapter 4. Since the chairmanship position often is institutionally underdeveloped, as Tallberg states, it is possible to introduce new practices such as a common, overarching chairmanship. At the ministerial meeting in Salekhard, Russia in 2006, Norway handed out a paper that presented the Scandinavian chairmanship and its priorities for the next six years.

Consequently, that the Norwegian delegation managed to get the other Scandinavian countries to agree to continue their agenda, thereby entailed that their agenda would “live on” for six years, not only two. The common Scandinavian agenda therefore had the same three focuses as Norway: Climate change, integrated ocean management, and improvement of the efficiency of the Arctic Council. Nevertheless, even though the Norwegian chairmanship agenda now was set to live for four more years than it normally would, did the agreement still entail that Denmark and Sweden still would have their own chairmanship agendas. These would however be subordinated to the common agenda. According to Charron (2011, 770), the joint agenda did not focus solely on Scandinavian issues, which would have run against the spirit of the Arctic Council, and the other member states’ interests. Rather, the overarching agenda “pushed for a permanent secretariat, the completion of the important search and rescue agreement, and the continuation of ongoing projects”.

The establishment of the Arctic Council secretariat in Tromsø

Another aspect of the Norwegian chairmanship period that falls under the category of agenda-setting, (3) *to develop new institutional practices*, was the idea of creating a secretariat in Tromsø. As a way to further strengthen the Council, the third priority in their chairmanship agenda, the Norwegian delegation started thinking about ways to enhance the Arctic Council’s institutional identity. Until 2006, the state holding the chair had to create its own secretariat functions for the period it served as chair. That meant that there was no fixed or permanent way of arranging a secretariat, which led to a weakened constitutional memory for the Council. The Norwegian delegation decided to establish a temporary secretariat in Tromsø, and in order to counteract the abrupt dismantling of the secretariat after only two years, they suggested for Sweden and Denmark to keep the secretariat running also through their chairmanship period. In this process, the promise of financing was the key to reaching an agreement. Norway offered to create the secretariat and also pay for it during the coming

six years, and hence, both Sweden and Denmark got “a lot for free” in this deal, according to the informants. The Norwegian delegation knew that the other member states, especially Canada and the US would be negative to the idea of creating a permanent, not only temporary, secretariat in Tromsø. The Norwegian delegation’s strategy was that Norway, no matter how negative the other states would be, would establish a temporary ‘Scandinavian’ secretariat for the six years with full cost coverage by Norway. The presentation of the new temporary secretariat, its staff and responsibilities were given at the first SAO-meeting in Tromsø in April 2007. However, the Norwegian delegation was explicit in stating their long-term intention for the secretariat, which was to make it a permanent one (Klepsvik). In his welcoming speech at the ministerial meeting in Tromsø in April 2009, Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre explicitly stated that Norway wanted a permanent secretariat in Tromsø by the end of the Danish chairmanship in 2011: “I sincerely hope that the secretariat will have proven its value by then, and that it will continue in Tromsø on a permanent basis” (Arctic Council 2009).

Therefore, Norway continued to work for a permanent secretariat until the end of the Danish chairmanship period (2011-2013), marked at the ministerial meeting in Nuuk, Greenland in 2013. What followed was an intense period of negotiation to make sure that the secretariat became a permanent one, and most importantly, continued to be placed in Tromsø. Some states were positive from the very beginning, like Sweden, but others were deeply against, especially Canada and Russia. Early in the process Norway offered Tromsø as a location for the secretariat. Iceland later proposed to have the secretariat in Reykjavik. Eventually, Canada offered to have the secretariat in Ottawa, but this suggestion was never formally tabled due to lack of support. Some countries wanted the secretariat to be located in a capital, while others stressed the importance of host state financial contribution, location in the Arctic and proximity to Arctic research and business communities (Rosenberg). Norway’s foreign minister Støre managed to get both his counterparts in Russia and the US, Sergey Lavrov and Hilary Clinton on board in supporting Tromsø as the place for the permanent secretariat. In bilateral meetings with Lavrov, Norway offered to pay for a Russian translator that would not only be present at all Arctic Council meetings, but also translate all documents into Russian. Such diplomatic efforts both secured the support for Tromsø as a location for the secretariat, and also strengthened Russian Arctic governance, which is in Norway’s interest. The

translation agreement is still running in 2015, and consequently, Norway pays for all the cost related to Russian translation in the Arctic Council.

Eventually, when most of the Arctic Council member states could agree to Norway as a host country, many still opposed the idea of having it in Tromsø, and rather wanted it to be located in Oslo (Rosenberg). The argument was that it was easier logistically to reach Oslo than Tromsø. After a new round of negotiation, all the Arctic Council member states could agree on keeping it in Tromsø. At the ministerial meeting in Nuuk, Greenland in May 2011, the Arctic Ministers decided to establish the Standing Arctic Council Secretariat at the Fram Centre in Tromsø. The Standing Secretariat became operational on the 1st of June 2013. The agreement was that Norway, as the host country, should pay for half of the secretariats costs, in addition to their share of what all the other member states pay (1/8). Norway first suggested having three staff members, but this quickly rose, and “rather surprisingly, Russia suggested as many as 15 staff members” (Klepsvik). The secretariat now has ten employees. Rosenberg argues that the location of the secretariat puts Norway “on the map in relation to Arctic politics”. According to Lars-Otto Reiersen, who is leading the AMAP working group that is also located in Oslo, the secretariat is “a showcase for Norway”.²⁰ Other of my informants de-emphasizes the importance of the secretariat’s location. They argue that the secretariat is of purely administrative character, and that the political value consequently is rather low. However, the permanent secretariat is an important part of the Council, and it is also provided with key tasks when it comes to the Councils affairs. A clear argument for its domestic value for Norway is for example that the newly established Arctic Economic Council (AEC) has chosen to place its secretariat in Tromsø, due to an offer from the Norwegian business community to provide financial support for the first three years (Arctic Economic Council 2015). Additionally, the Arctic Council Indigenous Peoples’ Secretariat (IPS) is considering moving their secretariat from Copenhagen to Tromsø (Arctic Council 2013b).

5.2.2 Agenda-structuring: Strengthening the Arctic Council and involving Russia

In August 2007, a Russian submarine expedition led by Arthur Chilingarov planted a

²⁰ Interview 29.01.2015, Forskningsparken, Oslo.

titanium flag on the seabed at the North Pole. This act contributed to a lot of media articles that claimed that the race for the Arctic had begun. In July 2008, Russia renewed military overflights and decided to send warships into Arctic waters for the first time in decades. This sparked off a lot of “alarmist” views on the possibility for armed conflict in the Arctic region. According to Klepsvik, this led to “an enormous” need to tell the world that this is not the case in the Arctic: “We needed to spread the message that this was not the wild west, and that everything is happening in an orderly manner”. During the chairmanship period, Norway focused its diplomatic efforts on talking down the potential for conflict, for example by introducing the catchphrase “High North, low tension” (Hoel 2014, 83). The third point on the Norwegian chairmanship agenda was as mentioned to strengthen the Arctic Council. To have a strong Council is not only a mean in itself for the Norwegian government, it also has a pacificatory function in the Arctic region. To put this on the agenda meant that Norway followed its own (3) *constitutional priority* of wanting a stronger Council. According to Tallberg, the chair tends to enhance its own view on institutional reform and enlargement. For Norway, it is as previously mentioned of great interest to strengthen international law in the Arctic region, mostly due to the asymmetrical relationship Norway has to its neighbor Russia.

According to Tallberg, the chair structures the agenda in accordance with national preferences, like their (1) *regional priorities*. For Norway, to prioritize institutional strengthening of the Council is a way to reduce the conflict potential in the region. Norway, as a small state, needs to keep the relationship with Russia friction-free. The newly elected Norwegian government quickly became aware of this straight after they entered office in the autumn of 2005, when the Norwegian coast guard attempted to seize the Russian trawler *Elektron* for violating fishery regulation in the Svalbard zone, and two Norwegian coastguard officers were ‘kidnapped’ by the trawler’s skipper. The incident was resolved peacefully, but the Russians felt they had been treated unfairly and saw the Norwegian coastguard as an aggressive actor (Jensen and Rottem 2010, 80).²¹ Norway’s mantra when it came to the strengthening of the Arctic Council was to go from “policy-shaping to policy-making”, according to Klepsvik. The Norwegian delegation proposed for the rest of the Council that

²¹ Norway’s practice until the *Elektron* incident had been to act as a “lenient police”, according to Jensen and Vigeland (2010, 80). However, there had been previous incidents where the Norwegian coastguard have seized foreign vessels, e.g. an Icelandic fishing vessel in the Barents Sea in 1994, and a Russian trawler in 2001.

they should look at the possibility for cooperating on creating legally binding agreements during their chairmanship, but it was very limited interest from the other member states at this point.²² Following the line of thinking from Tallberg, the state holding the chair tend to emphasize issues that relates to their near abroad. The agenda tends to serve the chairs national interests, but these types of interests can often be framed as common interest for the region (Elgström 2003, 193). To strengthen the Council can therefore be viewed as a way to serve all the member-states interest, while also being of particular interest for Norway as an Arctic coastal state with great interest in having a strong international regime that can protect its interest and keep Russia at a friendly arm's length.

To fulfill the third point on the agenda, to enhance the efficiency of the Arctic Council, Norway presented a discussion paper on how to improve the efficiency of the Arctic Council at the SAO-meeting in Narvik in November 2007. In this paper, Norway suggested that the Council would benefit from creating a more equitable distribution and rotation of working group secretariats between the member states, in addition to a more reliable set of funding for projects. One might imagine that such initiatives would be received with enthusiasm by the other member states, since they all could benefit from having a more efficient Council. This was however not the case. The informants tell about severe difficulties with promoting this point on the agenda: "Both we and Finland some years earlier experienced that reorganization of the working group structure was difficult to achieve. One reason might have been fear for loosing secretariats" (Rosenberg). That some of the member states have a fear of loosing the working group secretariats, again demonstrates the value each state puts in the location of the Council's secretariats.

Introducing the concept of integrated ocean management

The second issue on the Norwegian chairmanship agenda was integrated ocean management, a concept stemming from the Norwegian government, and more or less unfamiliar to the rest of the Council. A couple of months before entering the chairmanship position, in October 2006, the Norwegian government launched a national plan for integrated ocean management for the Barents Sea and the sea areas off the Lofoten Islands. Its purpose was to provide a framework for sustainable use of natural resources through the co-existence of different

²² It was first during a meeting under the Danish chairmanship (2009-2011) that the US suggested to negotiate a seek and rescue-agreement (SAR), which later was implemented at the ministerial meeting in Nuuk, Greenland in 2011.

industries, while still maintaining the structure, functioning and productive of the ecosystems (Arctic Council 2011b). This is a clear example of a chair that prioritizes issues that are related to their own policies in the region, what Tallberg labels (2) *socio-economic priorities*. Here, as previously mentioned, Norway thought the rest of the Council members would benefit from learning about the work Norway had done in this area. At the first SAO-meeting in Tromsø in April 2007, this was the first issue on the agenda. The project "Best Practices in Ecosystems-based Oceans Management in the Arctic" (BePOMAr) did however receive mixed feedback (Arctic Council 2008). Some member states argued that it was outside the scope of the Arctic Council to engage in academic studies of comparisons of domestic programs, and Sweden stated that it did not consider its marine management activities to be of "oceanic" character. Russia stressed the importance of harmonizing best practices with national laws and regulations, and that the initiative is not aimed at establishing a rule based regime, but simply present good examples. Hence, the report on Observed Best Practices was delivered to the Arctic ministers at the ministerial meeting in Tromsø in 2009, as a policy suggestion of ocean management based on an ecosystem approach for governments to consider.

The importance of financing

The financing of the chairmanship was the first issue that was raised, according to Rosenberg. In this period, both the foreign minister in the Bondevik II-government (2001-2005), and the new foreign minister Jonas Gahr Støre, who came to power when the Stoltenberg I-government won the election of 2005, had put off a great amount of money for the High North. The Norwegian delegation therefore followed one strategy, which pervaded their chairmanship period: To "suggest, offer financing, and carry out". The Norwegian delegation was aware of the funds that were available to them, and used this strategically when they pursued their agenda: "We started projects that we found interesting. It could be huge discussions, but we put money on the table. Through financing we managed to promote issues that we thought was interesting" (Klepšvik). In a consensus-based regime as the Arctic Council, it is the member state's themselves who suggest new projects or issues they want to focus on. Initiatives may stop due to the lack of funding, or that the other states does not find your idea interesting enough to provide funding for it. Therefore, it is useful, and perhaps even crucial, to offer funding for an idea. A great deal of the Council's projects are of such a character that they more or less only have positive effect for the other member states. There is

therefore no real incentive for the other member states to block suggestions, unless the suggestions does not run against their own national interest. However, when the state's has to pay for a project they are not interested in, they will most likely be negative to it. To offer funding is therefore a way to circumvent this issue. As stated previously, that Norway offered to fund the secretariat for a six-year period (and still is still the member state that pays the most for its existence) made the likelihood of getting it much higher.

5.2.3 Agenda-exclusion: No apparent sensitive issues

According to Tallberg, the possibility to exclude certain issues from the agenda is also a feature of the chairmanship position. The chair can (1) remain silent on an issue, (2) exclude items from the agenda or (3) defer to take a decision until a new chair is in place. The excluded issues are of equal importance to the issues that indeed are placed on the agenda. Nevertheless, the exclusion of issues from the agenda is difficult to spot for an outsider looking in, because an exclusion is by definition a non-decision. From the collected data material it is difficult to spot whether the Norwegian delegation have conducted any agenda-exclusion-efforts. The written sources, especially the meeting documents from the meetings under the Norwegian chairmanship period, do not entail evidence for any of these three ways of excluding issues from the agenda. However, this does not necessarily imply that the Norwegian chairmanship not did any efforts to exclude items from the agenda, but based on the available data material, I cannot find arguments that point in that direction. Perhaps this is due to a limitation in my sources, for example that I have not had access to documents that to a larger extent could indicate that such efforts had occurred. Neither the interviewees have provided me with insight of this kind. This is maybe due to the fact that when such efforts are not a known part of the chairmanship period, the informants do not want to share it, especially not on a later stage. Nevertheless, Tallberg's theory presents all five ways of agenda-shaping as efforts the chair can make use of, but the chair does not necessarily make use of them all. Based on this, I argue that agenda-exclusion was not a visible part of the Norwegian chairmanship. Nevertheless, this does not dismiss that it might have occurred.

5.2.4 Procedural control: Presentation of the Norwegian North

That the chair has procedural control gives it the authority to decide the sequence, frequency

and specific decisions on the location and structure of meetings. Norway, like most of the other member states holding the chairmanship position, held all the Council's meetings in the north of Norway. During the two and a half years as a chair, Norway held meetings in the northern cities Svolvær, Narvik, Tromsø and Kautokeino. To present the northern territories have become a tradition for the state holding the chair in the Council. According to Klepsvik, this represents "a possibility to show off the Norwegian north, and if you use it consciously, it is of great importance". One might think that this is superfluous for people working with the Arctic Council, but the informants describe situations where high government officials have a lack of knowledge about the other member states Northern areas. Klepsvik describes it as a political instrument, not only regarding the other member states, but also domestically. The meetings get a lot of attention and media coverage in the local community, and is hence a possibility to show the work Norway and the Arctic Council does. The Norwegian delegation wanted Norwegians to see that they worked thoroughly with promoting Norwegian interest in the Council, according to Klepsvik.

5.2.5 Representation: The role of individuals

When acting as the Arctic Council chair, Norway is responsible for representing the Arctic Council to the outside world. As previously mentioned, the Norwegian Stoltenberg-government put the High North on the top of the agenda. Foreign minister Jonas Gahr Støre²³ was a driver to get Arctic Council's work recognized outside the polar circle, and to place Arctic politics at the top of the government's foreign policy agenda. This did not just entail the placing of a larger amount of money for the purpose, but that there also existed political will to secure Norway's interest in the Arctic. The fact that Støre brought up Arctic affairs in meetings with his counterparts in the US and Russia contributed to place the Arctic region high on the global agenda, according to Klepsvik. When it comes to representation to the outside world, it is the chairing country that is in charge over how far up on the foreign policy agenda Arctic issues should be handled. When Støre put a lot of weight on Arctic issues during the Norwegian chairmanship period, due to the governments focus on the High North, it contributed to increase the attention on Arctic affairs. In addition, he was continuously

²³ Støre was appointed as foreign minister when the red-green coalition won the election in 2005, and continued in the position when they were re-elected in 2009. In 2012 he was moved to the position as Secretary of Labour. When the red-green coalition lost the election in 2013, and in April 2015 Støre was elected as leader of the Labour Party.

involved in the chairmanship. The Norwegian officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were in frequent contact with the political leadership in the Ministry, which was very inspiring for the people working with the chairmanship (Klepvik, Rosenberg).

The day before the scheduled ministerial meeting in Tromsø on the 29th of April, Norway arranged an international conference on climate change. The conference *Melting Ice: Regional Dramas, Global Wake-Up Call* were co-hosted by Nobel Peace Prize laureate Al Gore and the Norwegian foreign minister Jonas Gahr Støre. The purpose was to discuss the impacts of melting ice in the Polar and mountain areas worldwide. The conference received a lot of media attention, with headlines like “Støre and Al Gore gives the world a wake-up call”, “Tromsø may become a climate concept” and “–Excellent work, Støre” (Nordlys 2009; Rana Blad 2009; TV2 2009). The goal with the conference was to put climate change in the Arctic on the agenda before the UN Climate Conference in Copenhagen in December later that year.

5.3 Summary

In this chapter, I have provided a summary of the Norwegian Arctic policy to see which priorities Norway has in the High North. Then I have addressed the question of whether Norway did any effort in shaping the agenda as described by Tallberg during its period as an Arctic Council chair.

I found that Norway indeed made use of several agenda-shaping efforts. First, when it comes to agenda-setting, the creation of a joint Scandinavian chairmanship and the establishment of the temporary secretariat in Tromsø represents what Tallberg defines as the *development of new institutional practices*. None of these initiatives have ever before been suggested and carried out by a Council chair.

When it comes to structuring the agenda in accordance with national interest, I find that Norway's focus on strengthening the efficiency of the Arctic Council can be viewed in relation to Norway's need for strengthening international law and the institutional framework in the Arctic, due to the asymmetrical relationship with Russia. In addition, Norway introduced the concept of integrated ocean management, which was intended to inform the

rest of the Council about Norway's experience on the field. It was also clear that one important way to get issues the Norwegian delegation wanted on the agenda was to offer financing to do it. This was also the key to getting the temporary secretariat to Tromsø during the six years of Scandinavian chairmanship.

I found no evidence that would imply that Norway consciously tried to avoid issues on the agenda. Agenda-exclusion efforts are difficult to track in the empirical material. An exclusion is by definition a non-decision, which might not be observable for an outsider looking in. Additionally, the interviewees did not provide me with the necessary insight on this field. The use of method triangulation in the treatment of the data should increase the possibility of finding such efforts, however, this was not the case in this analysis.

To sum it up, through its period as a chair, Norway managed to secure some of its interests, mainly through the establishment of the temporary secretariat in Tromsø, that later became a permanent one, and through creating a joint Scandinavian chairmanship period with Denmark and Sweden. Without the chairmanship position, these two goals would probably not have been reached. The fact that Norway managed to secure long-term issues such as these makes it apparent that the chairmanship functioned as an additional way for Norway to secure national interest, through some of the agenda-shaping efforts as they are described by Tallberg.

6 The Canadian chairmanship: The domestic strain

In this chapter, I will first conduct an analysis of Canada's Arctic strategy, focusing on the period before it entered the chairmanship position of the Arctic Council in 2013. The discussion rests on the policy documents *Canada's Northern Strategy: Our North, Our Heritage, Our Future* (2009), *Achievements under Canada's Northern Strategy, 2007-2011* (2011), and *Statement on Canada's Arctic Policy* (2010). I divide Canadian Arctic policy into three parts; (i) maintaining Arctic sovereignty, (ii) enhance development in the north, and (iii) sustainable development and business.

Then I will investigate the Canadian chairmanship period of the Arctic Council, which lasted from 2013 to 2015, to see how Canada made use of any of the agenda-shaping efforts as described by Tallberg.

6.1 Canadian Arctic policy

Over the past decade, the Arctic has come to play an increasingly prominent role in Canadian policy (Huebert 2011, 193). More than 40 percent of the country's landmass and 162,000 kilometers of its coastline lies more than 60 degrees north (Lackenbauer 2014, 22). The Canadian North was a key component of the Conservatives' 2005 election platform, which played on the idea of an Arctic sovereignty "crisis" that needed decisive action from the government (Lackenbauer 2011b, 6). Since coming into office in 2006,²⁴ the Canadian Conservative Party government of Stephen Harper has started several projects concerning the ability for Canadian military and civil authorities to operate in the northern region.²⁵ The

²⁴ The Harper government formed a minority government after the election in 2006. In the 2011 election, the Conservatives won again, and were then able to create a majority government.

²⁵ For example the expanding and enhancing of the Canadian Rangers; ordering Arctic/Offshore Patrol Ships; building a deepwater Arctic docking and refueling facility in Nanisivik; launching RadarSat-2 to provide enhanced surveillance and data-gathering capabilities; conducting major military exercises; building a new Canadian Forced Reserve Unit in Yellowknife; and creating the Arctic Response Company Group (Lackenbauer 2011a, 232).

Prime Minister's Office, the Department of National Defense, the Department of Foreign Affairs, and a host of other federal departments have placed the region to the top of their agenda (Huebert 2011, 214). Until now, the northern territories have been inaccessible due to the hostile Arctic climate, but when this is changing and the region may be prone to extensive external interest. The increasing interest in the region is the reason why the government decided to launch its northern agenda in 2009, according to Prime Minister Stephen Harper (Government of Canada 2009, 10). The policy document *Canada's Northern Strategy* emphasizes four main pillars in Canadian Arctic policy: exercising Canada's Arctic sovereignty, promoting social and economic development, protecting Canada's environmental heritage, and improving and devolving Northern governance.²⁶

According to Lackenbauer (2011a, 228), the Canadian government presents a dual logic when it emphasizes sovereignty, national security and national interests, and at the same time advocate for international cooperation and stewardship. Through opposite views presented in media articles and between academics in Canada, different views on whether Canada's sovereignty in the north is challenged or not has been expressed. There is a clear division between those who think of the Arctic as a potential battleground, and advocate for a strong Canada that takes control and defend its sovereignty, and those who think the government should focus on stewardship related to climate and geopolitical change. The first perspective, which can be labeled as an "alarmist" perspective on Arctic issues, have often contributed to getting Northern issues on the political agenda. However, even though Canadian governments have made bold statements about investments in Northern sovereignty and security issues, they have not managed to deliver an integrated and proactive Arctic strategy, according to Lackenbauer.

The Canadian government states that it is "playing a leadership role in Arctic issues, both at home and internationally" (Government of Canada 2010, 12). There are a number of challenges and opportunities facing the Arctic, and many of these are best addressed by cooperation with other states, according to the Canadian Government. Therefore, "(...) To further our national interests, Canada will continue to work with its Arctic neighbors through the Arctic Council, with Arctic Ocean coastal states on issues of particular relevance to the

²⁶ Canada is a federal state, meaning power is divided between the national government, its ten provinces and the three territories, Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut. The territories have historically been provided with less sovereignty than the provinces.

Arctic Ocean, and bilaterally with key Arctic partners, particularly the United States (Government of Canada 2010, 12).

(i) Maintaining Arctic sovereignty

The Government has emphasized the importance of security through its commitment to enhance Canadian northern defense capabilities, according to Lackenbauer (2011a). In the Northern Strategy from 2009, the Canadian government ensures that it will “patrol and protect our territory through enhanced presence on the land, in the sea, and over the skies of the Arctic” (Government of Canada 2009, Introduction). These areas need urgent attention, according to the government, especially due to the regions richness in natural resources; oil and gas reserves, diamond mines, and commercial fisheries. These areas have enormous economic potential, according to the Canadian government, and they are about to be “unlocked” (Government of Canada 2009, 15). The rising interest in the region is what makes Canadian stewardship of their territory and the “active promotion of Canadian interests internationally (...) more important than ever before” (Government of Canada 2009, 33).

According to Lackenbauer, senior Canadian officials have made some peculiar statements about Arctic Security the last decade. For example, when the Russian government announced a new frontier law to define its southern Arctic claim in September 2008, Prime Minister Harper responded that Canada was stepping up its military measures as a response. The Russian foreign ministry later explained that the new federal law had nothing to do with its continental shelf claim (Lackenbauer 2011a, 230). Despite official assurances that Canadian sovereignty is well established legally, and that boundary or water disputes with neighboring countries are well managed, these types of threat narratives continue to be used by government officials. Scenarios of these types seem to resonate with Canadians, and it is important to remember that statements like this are often aimed at a domestic audience (Lackenbauer 2014, 23).

Most of Canada’s coastline, which is the world’s longest, is in the Arctic. In November 2003, Canada ratified UNCLOS and by December 2013 they submitted the evidence for its extended continental shelf outside the existing two-hundred-nautical-mile EEZ. Hence, Canada has extensive jurisdiction and sovereign rights in the region, but it faces some unresolved bilateral boundary disputes. Nonetheless, these disputes are well managed, and

pose no threat to Canadian sovereignty (Hoel 2014, 52). The existing disagreements are a dispute with Denmark over the small Hans Islands that is located between Greenland and northern Canada, with the US over the Northwest Passage, and the boundary dispute with the US regarding the division of the Beaufort Sea. However, except for the small island Hans Island, Canada does not face any international challenges to its sovereignty over its Arctic lands. The legal status of the Northwest Passage poses a more intractable dilemma than the questions of terrestrial sovereignty, according to Lackenbauer (2011). This has been an issue that has created a lot of tension between Canada and the US in the past.²⁷ Still, in the northern strategy from 2009, the US is described as an “exceptionally valuable partner in the Arctic”, with which Canada has managed its differences responsibly since the Second World War.

(ii) Development in the north

In the policy document *Statement on Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy* from 2010, Canada's role as an “Arctic power” is emphasized. The document was launched to provide an international platform on which one could “project Canada's national interests in the world” (Government of Canada 2011, 12). It outlines a vision of the Arctic as a stable, rules-based region with clearly defined boundaries. But according to Lackenbauer, implementing a vision that supports sovereignty, security and stewardship will “entail on-going discussions about how to balance the interests of the Arctic states, Northern peoples, non-Arctic states and organizations, development and transportation companies, and other groups with interest in the region”(2011a, 7). Of the total four million inhabitants in the Arctic, around 500.000 are indigenous peoples. The highest proportions are found in Greenland (88.1 percent), the Canadian north (50.8 percent) and Alaska (15.6 percent). Aboriginal peoples in Canada, including the Dene, Gwich'in, Cree and Métis, live in communities across Yukon, southern Northwest Territories and northern border regions of mainland provinces.²⁸

Since there has not been any long-term strategy for northern development or political incorporation, the Canadian north is severely underdeveloped compared to the southern

²⁷ The US claims that the Northwest Passage is an international trait, whilst Canada upholds its sovereignty over the passage. For a thorough historical assessment, see Lackenbauer (2011a, 222–227)

²⁸ Three indigenous peoples groups with permanent participant status in the Arctic Council have strong roots in Canada: the Arctic Athabaskan Council, the Gwich'in Council International, and the Inuit Circumpolar Council (Government of Canada 2009, 13).

provinces (Coates and Poelzer 2014, 6). Statistics after statistics decries the living conditions, high homelessness rates, high suicide rates, high unemployment rate, high substance abuses and the lack of mental health services (Charron 2011, 776). Contrasting this picture, the Canadian government wants northerners to be “self-reliant individuals that live in healthy, vital communities, manage their own affairs and shape their own destinies” (Government of Canada 2009, 1). The government is therefore funding critical infrastructure needs and services such as hospitals, schools, infrastructure and social services. In addition, increased self-rule for the northern territories is a political goal for the Harper government, and in November 2013, the Harper government signed a devolution agreement with the northern territories (Huffington Post 2013). This agreement entails that the control over the northern resources for the first time in history is in the hand of the northerners, who are also provided them with a share of the royalties of the resource production. In an interview with the Canadian newspaper The Globe and Mail in January 2014, Prime Minister Stephen Harper said: “We want to be able to see the northerners (...) masters of their own affairs to the same degree that southerners are” (The Globe and Mail 2014b). The government is concerned with creating and sustaining a good relationship to the northern territories, and has made it a domestic political goal to further develop the northern areas.

(iii) Sustainable development and business

It is expected that the Arctic region entail substantial oil and gas resources, based on the findings by the US Geological Survey (Bird et al. 2008). Canada is a major oil and gas exporter, but has so far kept its focus on the petroleum resources that can be found in other places further south (Hoel 2014, 78). Although oil and gas constitutes the primary focus of most states with respect to the Arctic, there are also other resources that can be extracted from the region. Unconventional resources, known as gas hydrates, are also potentially located in the Arctic. In addition, on the basis on three northern mines, Canada has gone from producing no diamonds to being the world’s third largest diamond producer. The diamond mines in the north is a \$2-billion-per-year industry, which is about half of the economy of the Northwest Territories. The enormous mineral resources will undoubtedly contribute to the development of northern towns and communities for the coming years (Hoel 2014, 78). When debating environmental concerns, the Canadian government often underlines the importance of that environmental conservation is keeping pace with development. Economic opportunity can “come hand in hand with preserving the cultural and environmental riches of

the North”, according to the Canadian government (Government of Canada 2011, 3). Last year, prime minister Stephen Harper stated that “There’s a hell of a lot of room for economic development while still maintaining large, huge areas of pristine environment and, by the way, the environmental tourism that could go with that is already starting on a very small scale” (The Globe and Mail 2014b).

Furthermore, the Arctic has increasingly become a destination point for tourists. There has been an substantial increase in the number of cruise ship vessels that sails to the waters around Alaska and Greenland (Huebert 2011, 202). One of the most controversial economic potentials of the Arctic is the prospect of new northern shipping routes. There are three potential shipping routes that may be taken in the Arctic: The Northwest Passage, the Northern Sea Route and Northeast Passage, and over the North Pole (Huebert 2011, 202). The Harper government has through its two periods in office increasingly stressed the economic potential of the Arctic region. This is often in relation to the need for social development for the northerners, but also as a goal in itself. In the government’s Economic Action Plan (EAP) that was first launched in 2012, barriers to private investments and programs supporting economic growth in the north were removed (Government of Canada 2011, 3). Additionally, the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency (CanNor) was established in August 2009 to ensure a stronger economy and create business and job opportunities for people living in Northern communities.

To summarize, I divide Canadian Arctic policy into three main parts; (i) maintaining Arctic sovereignty and military security, (ii) enhance development in the north and (iii) sustainable development and business. When Canada took over the chairmanship position in 2013, it was the second time serving as a chair, as it was the first state to ever hold the position after the establishment of the Council in 1996. I now turn to Canada’s second chairmanship period, which lasted from May 2013 to April 2015, and thereby marked the finalization of the first round of chairmanship rotation.

6.2 Agenda-shaping in the Canadian chairmanship period (2013-2015)

Under the ministerial meeting in Kiruna, Sweden in 2013, Canada took over the chairmanship from Sweden. This marked the end of the six-year long Scandinavian chairmanship period. One overarching issue that took a lot of the attention at the Kiruna meeting was the inclusion of EU as an observer state to the Council. While all the other member states were positive to the admission, neither Canada nor Russia wanted the EU to be accepted as an observer state. Russia argued that the inclusion of EU would contribute to politicize the Arctic Council, and they claimed that their previous experience with having EU involved in other regional forums were examples of this. For Canada, on the other hand, the crucial issue was the EU's ban on seal products in 2009,²⁹ which was viewed by Inuit hunters as ruinous to local economies (The Arctic Journal 2015b). However, at the Kiruna ministerial meeting, the other member states managed to get EU included principally as an ad hoc observer. This entailed that EU has to request permission to be present at each meeting it wants to participate in. The inclusion of EU represented a "massive loss" for Canada, and in a couple of weeks, all the people who had worked for Canada in the Arctic Council either relocated or retired (Informant 11).³⁰ Therefore, when Canada took over as chair, the period started off with a great fear of conducting errors or step wrong in political questions among the Canadian bureaucracy.

6.2.1 Agenda-setting: Devaluation of the Arctic Council?

The appointment of Minister of Health as Minister for the Arctic Council

The preparations for the chairmanship started during the fall of 2012, almost a year before the takeover at the ministerial meeting in Kiruna, according to Jeannette Menzies,³¹ who is head at the Canadian International Centre for the Arctic Region.³² In August 2012, Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced that the Minister of Health, Leona Aglukkaq, would serve as

²⁹ See European Commission's Adoption of the third Maritime safety package (2009).

³⁰ Interview 29.04.2015, Oslo.

³¹ Interview 29.01.2015, Oslo.

³² The Canadian International Centre for the Arctic Region (CICAR) was established in Oslo, Norway in 2006 to provide strategic advice to Canada's Arctic advocacy, foreign policy directions and action and strengthen the regional engagement with Arctic state partners (Government of Canada 2013b).

Minister for the Arctic Council during the Canadian chairmanship. This marked a shift from the Council's tradition that it is the foreign minister in the chairing country who functions as the Minister for the Arctic Council. Aglukkaq is from the small town of Inuvik in the Northwest Territories, and has previously served different roles in regional politics.³³ When Aglukkaq was named the Minister of Health in October 2008, after the conservative government first entered office, she was the first Inuk in Canadian history to be appointed to the Cabinet of Canada. Prime Minister Harper "decided that Aglukkaq should have the position because of her background", according to Menzies. The decision to not let the foreign minister work as the Arctic minister is a clear way of breaking with earlier institutional practices, and therefore represents a way of (3) *developing new institutional practices* in order to reach political goals. Several critics claimed that to appoint the Minister of Health to function as a Minister to the Arctic contributed to deemphasize the importance of the Council, partly because the health sector is not a priority area for the Council. Hence, it could seem as if this was a move aimed at a domestic audience rather than an action that would strengthen the Council as a whole. This underscored the Canadian government's view on the Arctic Council as a regional forum rather than a global one. In July 2013, however, Aglukkaq was relocated to be Minister of Environment, a position that is arguably closer to the work of the Council. Still, the general view of this institutional move was that it was meant to please a domestic audience in the north rather than the Arctic Council as a whole.

Agenda-setting involves (1) *awareness-raising to certain issues*. According to Menzies, the traditional way of life is important for the people in the north of Canada. Thus, "the politicians want to look after these interests, and developed the chairmanship agenda in cooperation with the people in the north". As a part of the preparations for the chairmanship, Aglukkaq travelled around in the northern territories, to listen to what the people of the north wanted the chairmanship agenda to be focused on. She found that few people in the north even knew about the Arctic Council and its work. As a consequence, "she decided to put their needs and interests on the agenda" (Menzies). The appointment of Aglukkaq as a minister for the Arctic Council "underlines the priority the Government of Canada places on the Arctic as well as its commitment to ensure that the region's future is in the hands of Northerners (Government of Canada 2013a). The overarching theme for Canada's chairmanship was

³³ In 2004, Aglukkaq represented the district of Nittilik in the Nunavut Legislative Assembly, and has previously had different roles in the governments of both the Northwest Territories and Nunavut (Government of Canada 2015a).

development for the people of the North, with a focus on responsible Arctic resource development, safe Arctic shipping and sustainable circumpolar communities. I will focus on the overarching theme later, but first, I will look at the two under-pillars: Responsible Arctic resource development and safe Arctic shipping.

Sustainable development versus environmental concerns

The first pillar of the Canadian chairmanship agenda, responsible Arctic resource management, represented another breach with the previous chairmanship agendas. Previously, other chairmanship agendas have generally been focused on environment and climate change. To explicitly state “resource management” as an issue on the agenda without including environmental concerns was by someone perceived as diminishing the Councils mandate as stated in the Ottawa Declaration from 1996. Environmental groups openly reacted to the agenda, which they felt “opened the Arctic up for business” (Greenpeace Canada 2014; The Arctic Journal 2015a). Several of the other member states were concerned that the work related to climate change would not be followed up thoroughly during the Canadian chairmanship (Norwegian MFA official).³⁴

For the Canadian government, the focus on responsible resource development in the Arctic was important because “businesses in the Arctic will play a strong role in building a sustainable and economically vibrant future for the region” (Government of Canada 2013a). Hence, to focus on Arctic business was a way of increasing development for the people in the north, and did not represent a breach with the focus on environmental concerns, according to the Canadian government. Still, Arctic Council agendas had for the last decade all been focused around climate change, melting ice and environmental concerns. According to Heather Exner-Pirot³⁵ from the University of Saskatchewan in Canada, it is “(..) not like the people of the north does not want environmental protection too, they just don’t want it at the expense of a good life”. To enhance the business climate in the Arctic would be a way to sustain the communities in the north of Canada. However, following this discussion, an anonymous informant from the Canadian Ministry of Foreign Affairs said “I have to defend Canadian chairmanship priorities because people think of development as an oil spill in the

³⁴ Interview 10.03.2015, Oslo.

³⁵ Interview 04.10.2014, Reykjavik.

Arctic, they don't think of it as poverty reduction" (Informant 3).³⁶ Furthermore, the informant also made it clear that the lack of stating environmental protection as a priority for the Council had been an issue throughout the chairmanship period:

"I've had this discussion with so many people and it seems to be this perception that if you don't have environmental protection and climate change all over it, then everything else is diminishing the Arctic Council and it's priorities, and not remaining true to the actual vision (...) Go look at the Ottawa declaration, you've got sustainable development on one side and environmental protection as number two. That's what I said, it is mutually enforcing. And because Canada has maybe put a little bit more emphasis on one, does not mean that we have forgotten about the other" (Informant 3).

This emphasis on responsible Arctic resource management and safe shipping was manifested in one concrete (2) *proposal for action*. As stated in its chairmanship programme, Canada wanted to establish a Circumpolar Business Forum, that would "foster circumpolar economic development and provide opportunities for business to engage with the Arctic Council" (Government of Canada 2013a). A task force was established to facilitate the creation of such a forum, which would support the Council in fostering sustainable economic growth and development in the Arctic region. The initiative came at the Kiruna meeting, when the eight member state ministers "recognize(d) that Arctic economic endeavors are integral to sustainable development for peoples and communities in the region, desire(d) to further enhance the work of the Arctic Council to promote dynamic and sustainable Arctic economies and best practices, and decide(d) to establish a Task Force to facilitate the creation of a circumpolar business forum" (Arctic Council 2014). In the task force's report to the SAOs in December 2013, it stated that it wanted to change the name to the Arctic Economic Council (AEC), since this better reflected the purpose of the initiative. The purpose of the AEC was to foster business development in the Arctic, engage in deeper circumpolar cooperation and provide a business perspective to the work of the Arctic Council. Hence, the AEC was established as an independent organization to facilitate Arctic business. In April 2015, the AEC established its secretariat in Tromsø, due to "the generous offer by the Norwegian business community" to finance for the coming three years (Arctic Council 2014; Arctic Economic Council 2015). At the same time, a new chair was appointed, Tara Sweeney, an Alaskan with roots in the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC).

³⁶ Interview 04.10.14, Reykjavik.

6.2.2 Agenda-structuring: The regional strain

Development for the people of the North

According to Tallberg, the chair structures the agenda in relation to its own national interest. As previously mentioned, the Canadian government is quite explicit in stating this itself in its Arctic Strategy from 2010: “(...) To further our national interests, Canada will continue to work with its Arctic neighbors through the Arctic Council (2010, 12). The Canadian Arctic strategy from 2010 has four main pillars: Exercising Canada’s Arctic environmental heritage, and improving and devolving Northern governance. The latter refers to the government’s wish for the Northerners to live in “healthy, vital communities, manage their own affairs and shape their own destinies” (Government of Canada 2009, 1). This stands in great contrast to what actually characterizes the Canadian north; poor living conditions, high homelessness rates, the high suicide rates, high unemployment rates, high substance abuses, and lack of mental health services (Charron 2011, 776) According to Menzies, to put northerners on the top of the chairmanship agenda is for Canadians “an obvious choice”. Hence, the focus on development in the North is an example of creating the agenda out of (1) *regional priorities*, in relation to the chair’s own geographical and historical affinities. This is clear, because most of my informants have the same view on this issue, with several stating “the Canadian reality is not our reality”.

According to Eirik Sivertsen,³⁷ who is the chair of the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region (SCPAR),³⁸ the Canadian priorities were too attached to their domestic politics: “The problem isn’t necessarily to mix foreign and domestic policy, these are anyhow linked to some extent, the problem is how you do it. What is problematic is to draw domestic political issues into the Arctic Council”. Several of my informants think that Canada’s focus on the Northerners during their chairmanship functioned as a lightning conductor for what many characterizes as a failed policy in the north. This is for example illustrated through the way the agenda was developed. In the consensus-based Arctic Council, it is tradition for the chair to develop the agenda in relation to the working groups, so that they can have a say in what priorities that are linked to their on-going work. In this

³⁷ Interview 19.02.215, Oslo.

³⁸ SCPAR is responsible for the work in-between the biannual Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region (CPAR), which is a parliamentary body comprising delegations appointed by the national parliaments of the Arctic states and the European Parliament.

way, the working groups can cooperate with the chair and agree that they will finish ongoing project by the next ministerial meeting, so that the chair can benefit from putting it on the agenda, and the working groups will receive as much attention as possible for their work. The Canadian delegation and minister Aglukkaq went to the north of Canada to listen to the Northerners own view of what was important to focus on during the chairmanship period. For the working groups, who are described by many of my informants as the machinery of the Arctic Council, this might create a feeling that the chair does not anchor their priorities in the previous work of the Arctic Council, but chooses its agenda purely out of what is most suitable for their own regional and socio-economic priorities.

The regional strain

Several of the informants emphasize that all member states of the Arctic Council acknowledge the privilege of the chair. Furthermore, the member states know that development of the people of the north is one of Canada's main concern in its Arctic policy. Therefore it came as no surprise that this was Canada's focus also throughout the chairmanship period. However, several claims that when the chairmanship does not root the agenda in the rest of the Arctic Council – the working groups and task forces – it leads to “a superficial agenda that does not strengthen the continuity of the Council's work” (Norwegian MFA official). In this way, the Canadian chairmanship represents a breach with the overall continuity of the Arctic Council, and is a strong narrowing down of the Council's mandate. A common phrase among people working with the Arctic Council is that “there are many Arctic's”. It is quite easy to spot when a state is pursuing its national interest when the geographical areas included in the Council are of such different character. To promote development in the north is as Menzies states an “obvious” priority for a country like Canada, but the North-American Arctic is quite different from the Scandinavian Arctic, or the Russian Arctic. If you compare a small city in the north of Norway to a small town in Canada, there are numerous differences. In Canada, the temperature can get down to minus 60 degrees Celsius, there are almost no infrastructure and very few connecting roads in the northern territories. In Norway, the northernmost municipality Finnmark is characterized by few inhabitants, but the living standard, the climate and the infrastructure is comparable to the rest of the country. Based on this identified, actual difference, one could argue that to work for development for the northerners is based on domestic interest and the critical need to improve the situation for the people who live in the Canadian north. According to Sivertsen,

“one thing is to assert their interest in the chairmanship position, another thing is to describe a situation no one else can relate to, and present it as an Arctic reality for all the member states”. Additionally, one could imagine that for Canada, to facilitate continued habitation and increased development in the north, the Government strengthens its territorial sovereignty in the region that already is of interest in relation to resource extraction.

According to Exner-Pirot, the bigger lesson of how the Canadian chairmanship agenda was received is that there is a huge disconnect between having a regional perspective of the Arctic, and a global perspective of the Arctic. This “disconnect”, according to Exner-Pirot, is finding itself manifested both in the sustainable development versus environmental concerns-discussion and the focus on development for the people of the North. In an interview with the Canadian professor Michael Byers in the Huffington Post, foreign diplomats “have privately criticized Canada for shifting the Arctic Council’s focus to domestic issues under its chairmanship” (Huffington Post 2015). Aglukkaq’s emphasis on the people of the north made many non-northerners feel that the Canadian chairmanship was “exclusive and parochial, focused on issues that were of interest to Canada domestically and Aglukkaq personally to the detriment of the many issues the forum had developed expertise and success with over the course of 15 years” (Exner-Pirot 2015a).

Furthermore, the chair can structure the agenda according to its (3) *constitutional priorities*, meaning the chairing country’s own view on institutional enlargement and reform. When asked about Canada’s view on the inclusion of observers to the Council, Prime Minister Harper answered: “Well, it’s been a concern (...) There’s been a lot of observer countries admitted” (The Globe and Mail 2014b). Harper thinks there has been set a precedence in the Council of including too many new observers, and states that Canada’s participation in the Council is based on the premise that: “(...) let me be absolutely clear on this – Canada’s participation in the Arctic Council under this government is predicated on the notion that this is an association of sovereign states”. This view on observer states has followed the government’s action while serving as a chair, and I argue that this falls under the concept of agenda-exclusion.

6.2.3 Agenda-exclusion: The inclusion of observers to the Council

The applications for observer state status in the Council from China and the EU dominated the media coverage at the ministerial meeting in Kiruna in May 2013. In Kiruna, China, Japan, Italy, Singapore, India and Korea were admitted as observer states, while the EU's application was deferred, due to the already mentioned resistance from Canada and Russia. While these two states reasoned differently over why the EU should not be an observer, they were as strongly against the inclusion. The Kiruna ministerial was characterized by an intense debate between the Arctic ministers over this issue (Informant 11). The situation was "agonizing in the amount of time and effort it sucked out of the Kiruna Ministerial, and in the distraction from more concrete and impactful activities of the Arctic Council it caused", according to Exner-Pirot (2015b). These events made it clear that the senior Arctic officials had to agree on the issues of observer status before the ministerial meeting, to avoid a situation like the one at the Kiruna meeting. However, one of the ways the chair can exclude items from the agenda, is to (1) *remain silent*. Several of my informants state that a characteristic of the Canadian chairmanship was the avoidance of the inclusion of the EU as an observer state. Through its agenda control, the chair is able to (2) *exclude items from the Councils agenda*. The issue of observer admissions was not on the agenda at any of the SAO meetings in Whitehorse and Yellowknife (Arctic Council 2011b).

Furthermore, the US suggested having a general evaluation on the role of the observers, and this initiative was welcomed by the other Arctic Council member states. A possible way to exclude issues from the agenda is to (3) *defer decisions until the new chair is in place*. At the ministerial meeting in Iqaluit, it was clear that the application from Switzerland, Mongolia and Turkey, in addition to a handful of NGOs and lobby groups, has to wait until the next ministerial in 2017 before they will receive an answer on their applications. This applies for the EU as well, who will not be considered for an upgrading to full observer status at least before 2017. A reason for the Canadian silence on the possibility for fully including the EU as an observer might be due to Leona Aglukkaq's background as a politician from the north. It is in Aglukkaq's election district that the strongest resentment towards EU can be found, and consequently, as a Minister for the Arctic, she is most likely to be held responsible if the Council's approved EU as a full observer. Arguably, this could reduce her chances for re-

election in the upcoming elections during the fall of 2015, and might be one reason why Canada wanted to postpone the decision on full observer status to the EU.

6.2.4 Procedural control: Making the administrative political

According to Tallberg, the chair is given the right to decide the sequence, frequency and specific decisions on the location and structure of meetings, in addition to be in charge of the meeting agenda and the right to speak during meetings. Canada took these formal powers and used it in a particularly conscious way. Perhaps this due to the events at the ministerial meeting in Kiruna in 2013, where the issue with approving the EU as an observer state created a lot of fear among the bureaucrats who were involved in the work with the chairmanship.

Spillover from the situation in Eastern Ukraine

An incident that took a lot of focus in international politics was when Russia annexed the internationally recognized Ukrainian territory of the Crimea in the aftermath of the Ukrainian Revolution in March 2014. This immediately led to concerns of the possibility for spillover-effects to other international arenas like the Arctic Council. Almost all of the member states stressed the importance of not letting the events in Ukraine affect the otherwise good cooperative working climate in the Council. However, Canada decided to boycott a task force meeting on black carbon and methane held in Moscow on April 14 and 15 in 2014, due to Russia's actions in Eastern Ukraine. The US did not participate at the task force meeting either, but took a more pragmatic approach and apologized to Russia for their absence (Informant 11).³⁹ According to Aglukkaq, Canada's decision to boycott the meeting meant it was taking a "principled stand" against Russia over the situation in Ukraine. At the same time, Prime Minister Harper stated publicly that he blamed Moscow for the separatist movement in Eastern Ukraine, and the federal government called in Russia's ambassador to Canada for a dressing down. In an Arctic Council context, it is rare that the other member states make political statements in a Council context. It is clear even in the Ottawa Declaration that questions or issues related to security is off the table, and will not be dealt with in what is an environmental forum. When the chairing country then is boycotting the

³⁹ The following three meetings in the coming six months did however enjoy full participation from all Arctic Council member states (Exner-Pirot 2015a).

Council's meetings, this was a clear breach with the tradition of excluding such issues from the Council. Several of the informants claim this is due to a lack of diplomatic skill among the Canadian diplomats, one stating: "If it's of such importance for the chairing country to make a political statement, you should not first agree to Moscow hold a working group meeting, for then to boycott it. More experienced diplomats simply avoid conflict prone places and issues without making a big deal out of it. Canada, on the other hand, dives straight into it".

One reason for the Canadian need to make a political statement towards Russia is its relatively large Ukrainian diaspora. Canada is home to more than 1.2 million Ukrainian-Canadians, which is the world's third-largest Ukrainian population behind Ukraine and Russia. This community has long had a voice in Ottawa, "and Ottawa listens", according to *The Globe and Mail* (2014c). According to professor Michael Byers, "(...) Any large diaspora community has influence in Canadian politics, and certainly 1.2 million people is a factor that weighs on the minds of every political leader. But we have to resist the temptation to assume that Canadian foreign policy is all to do with domestic politics" (2014c). Still, the harsh actions taken by Canada to show its stance towards Russia show that it is a concern for Canada to not at all be associated with Russian diplomats. According to Tallberg, the public opinion in the chair's home country can limit the chair's ability to take initiatives and construct compromises, because "certain issues are sufficiently sensitive in domestic politics that any compromise on the national interest would be politically hazardous for the government (Elgström 2003, 193). According to Elgström, this will become even clearer when there is an election in the near future. In Canada, the federal election is scheduled for October 2015, which means that the election campaign starts during the summer. This strengthens the argument that the Canadian government is especially vulnerable to political scandals in the period right before the beginning of the election campaign. Following Tallberg's framework, domestic constraints will reinforce already existing issues, and the chair will hence be particularly concerned with avoiding possible negative attention that can be used against them in an election (Elgström 2003, 195).

An Arctic Council ministerial meeting is normally placed in the end of May or in the beginning of June in the second year of each chairmanship period. However, Canada chose to arrange the ministerial meeting as early as the 24-25th of April. A speculation among several

of my informants is that Canada moved the ministerial meeting forward because they did not want it close to the upcoming election campaign. This is difficult to verify, but since the speculation was mentioned by a couple of my informants, it is noteworthy to mention. Anyway, to prepare for the ministerial meeting is a lot of work for the whole Arctic Council machinery, especially for the working groups. They often have big reports they have to finalize for presentation at the ministerial meeting, and the preparations for the meeting start minimum six months in advance. The rule is that they have to deliver their papers and reports within 60 or 90 days prior to the ministerial. These documents cannot just get “approval” by the ministers; they will be read thoroughly and commented on down to the very smallest details. This process is in itself time-consuming, so to move the meeting at least one month earlier “definitely adds extra layers of stress to the whole Arctic Council body” (Informant 7).⁴⁰

Detailed control over the chairmanship

According to Tallberg, the chairs vary in how much emphasis they put on the procedural part that follows the chairmanship position. In Canada’s case, one could imagine that the establishment of the permanent secretariat in Tromsø would ease the administrative part of the job for the chair, and relieve it of its more formal duty to plan meetings, create meeting agendas and send out press releases. The secretariat was established for this purpose, to provide organizational and administrative support, strengthen communication and outreach, and overall be the Council’s institutional memory. Its task is also to support the chairmanship in whatever help they need concerning planning, organizing or other issues (Arctic Council Secretariat 2014, 4–5). However, Canada did not take advantage of this support as much as one might expect. The chairmanship was characterized by a detailed control over the location of meetings, the structure of the meetings and press releases (Informant 7, informant 11). This was for example evident during the ministerial meeting in Iqaluit, where the observers present at the meetings had to sit in the back of the room even though there were other available seats. Overall, the Canadian delegation “created big discussions about small issues”, that most of the other member states found unimportant and not necessary to spend that much time on (Informant 11). A possible reason for the detailed control throughout the chairmanship was caused by the fear that followed the ministerial meeting in Kiruna in 2013. According to informant 11, “this fear pervaded the whole chairmanship period”. The fear of

⁴⁰ Interview 09.02.15, Oslo.

stepping wrong and get negative attention was so big that it led to an intensified control over several of the chair's areas of responsibility.

The Council's chair has to send out formal invitations to the ministerial meetings a couple of months prior to the meeting. During the Canadian chairmanship, it was the first time the host country did not send out such formal invitations to the foreign ministers of the member states and other participants. Canada did however send out a practical note about time and place to all participants, and the then foreign minister John Baird⁴¹ made a call to all his colleagues in the member states and gave a personal invitation to the ministerial, with the exception of Russia. The importance of such formal procedures and gestures are varying in different countries, but this was not well received in the Russian foreign ministry (Informant 11). Due to the treatment, Russia thought about sending a State Secretary and not the foreign minister to the upcoming ministerial meeting. In the beginning of April, the Russian embassy in Ottawa announced that its foreign minister Sergey Lavrov opted out of the ministerial meeting that was being held in two-three weeks. Instead, Russia sent its Minister of Natural Resources and Ecology, Sergey Donskoy, to the meeting (Huffington Post 2015).

Consequently, these issues show that the chair's formal procedural control can be used in a political manner. Informant 11 argues that the "administrative have become political during the Canadian chairmanship". The implication of politicizing the Arctic Council is that one might disturb the cooperative climate that has characterized the Council since its origin. In his statement at the Iqaluit ministerial meeting, the Russian Minister Donskoy stated: "Russia opposes any attempt to politicize the development of Arctic cooperation" (Arctic Council 2015). The International chair of the Arctic Athabaskan Council, Michael Stickman, continued this line of thinking when he stated in his remarks: "Decision-makers in Washington DC, Ottawa and Moscow, and our Asian and European observers, should understand this. We are not naïve, but this council and its individual members should shield our cooperation from broader political and geopolitical rivalries" (Alaska Dispatch News 2015). Nevertheless, it remains to be seen whether Canada's political statement towards Russia will get long-lasting conflicts. Russia's own emphasis on the importance of maintaining a good working climate in the Council and also the next chair of the Council, the

⁴¹ Foreign Minister John Baird resigned in the beginning of February 2015 (The Guardian 2015). Later that month, Robert Douglas Nicholson was appointed as foreign minister (Government of Canada 2015b).

US, has assured that there are other forums that are more appropriate for discussions on Arctic security (The Huffington Post 2015).

Another way Canada used its given procedural control, was to let their view on inclusion of new observers (as described in section 6.2.3) shape their organization of meetings during the ministerial meeting in Iqaluit. During meeting and press conferences, Canada made the observers sit in the back of the room even though there were available seats closer to the stage (Informant 11). Canada furthermore suggested to count the number of meetings the observers participated at, to make sure that they did not participate in more meetings than they were allowed according to the Council's rules of procedure (Informant 11). This initiative was not received well amongst the other member states, and was declined, but is however a clear indication that Canada wished to use its control over the administrative planning to exclude the observers.

6.2.5 Representation: A tense relationship towards the media

Following the Arctic Council tradition, Canada too held all of the Arctic Council meetings in the northern parts of Canada. The first SAO meeting under the Canadian chairmanship was held in Whitehorse, while the two following SAO-meetings was held in Yellowknife. Due to the low degree of infrastructure in the northern parts of Canada, the participants needed to travel far to rather remote places. The ministerial meeting was held in Iqaluit Canada divided the ministerial meeting into two parts. While the first day of the ministerial was held in Ottawa, the second day was held in the northern town of Iqaluit. The ministerial meeting in Iqaluit is the ministerial "that have had the least openness to it, and the least participation by the media" (Informant 11). There were a few journalists present at the Iqaluit-meeting; a couple from Canada, one from Denmark and one from the US. Since Iqaluit is a small town, there was only a limited amount of space for both participants at the ministerial meeting, including the media. It was therefore the first time there has ever been so few journalists present at a ministerial, according to informant 11. Not all media companies can afford to pay to cover travel expenses to such a remote location, so naturally, the media attention was more or less limited to the first day of the ministerial in Ottawa. The reason why Canada wanted to have all the meetings in the north was because they wanted to avoid the big media attention, according to an anonymous informant. The difficult stand towards Russia made it important

to avoid getting pictures of Canadian high governmental officials and the Russian energy minister Donskoy (Informant 11). Another way the avoidance of pictures was evident, was that there was no picture of all of the Arctic ministers together from the ministerial, which is usually posted on the Arctic Council web-page after a ministerial meeting.

Additionally, during the first day in Ottawa, there was a press conference where Canada's Arctic Minister Leona Aglukkaq, Canada's foreign minister Robert Douglas Nicholson and the US foreign minister John Kerry was present to speak about the ministerial, and also open for questions and answers in the end. The other foreign ministers had to sit in the assembly room, and were therefore prevented from speaking during the press conference. There were a lot of questions concerning Russian military preparations in the Arctic, and the situation in Ukraine, which the three ministers answered. According to one of my informants (10), Russia perceived this as "provocative, undemocratic and completely devoid of diplomatic flair", and the limit of how they could be treated was about to reach a tipping point.

6.3 Summary

In this chapter I have first identified some of Canada's key interests in the Arctic region: (i) maintaining Arctic sovereignty, (ii) enhance development in the north, and (iii) sustainable development and business. Then I turned to the Canadian chairmanship of the Arctic Council (2013-2015).

I find that Canada's action during the chairmanship period can be understood through the power resources belonging to the chairmanship position, as Tallberg describes them. When it comes to agenda-setting, the Canadian government's appointment of the previous Minister of Health Leona Aglukkaq as Minister for the Arctic Council was a way to (3) *develop new institutional practices*. This represented a breach with the Council's tradition of having the foreign minister in the chairing country as the Minister for the Arctic Council. The chairmanship agenda can be viewed as a way to (1) *raise awareness to certain issues* that perhaps have hitherto been neglected. The focus on development for the north was chosen as a priority area due to a lack of focus on this issue in the previous chairmanship, according to my informants. The establishment of the Arctic Economic Council (AEC) can also be seen as a way to *develop concrete proposals for action* (2).

Under agenda-structuring, I argue that the chairmanship agenda, with its overarching focus on development for the people of the north, was a way the Canadian government structured the agenda according to both their (1) *regional priorities* and (2) *socio-economic* needs of the Canadian north. I argue that the Canadian government's view on the inclusion of observer states to the Council represents a way to structure the agenda in according to its own (3) *constitutional priorities*, which entails how the chair relates to enlargement and reform of the institution. Related to the view on observer states, I find that the Canadian delegation made efforts to exclude issues regarding the inclusion of observer states from the agenda.

The chair's *procedural control* is its authority to decide the sequence, frequency and the location and structure of meetings. Canada had a strict attitude when dealing with these formal authorities, characterized by a detailed control over meeting agendas and location of meetings. I argue that Canada consciously used its procedural control to gain higher political goals, e.g. to take a stand towards Russia for its actions in Eastern Ukraine. Also, following the Arctic Council tradition, Canada used its possibility to control the location of meetings during the chairmanship to promote the Canadian north. However, this proved to be more complicated than for many of the other Arctic Council member states, due to the inaccessibility of the northern region in Canada. Hence, the ministerial meeting in Iqaluit was characterized by limited media participation and attention. Consequently, the possibility to *represent* the Arctic Council to the outside world became somewhat restricted, possibly due to domestic concerns.

7 Concluding remarks

In the two preceding chapters, I have analyzed the chairmanship period of Norway and Canada using Tallberg's conceptual framework of the chair as an agenda-shaper, with the aim of answering the question: *How, and to what degree did Norway and Canada project their Arctic national agendas through the chairmanship position of the Arctic Council?* In this final chapter, I will summarize the main findings and discuss the theoretical framework. Lastly, I will give some suggestions for further research.

7.1 Responsibility without power or an agenda-shaping position?

The analysis reveals some interesting differences between the two cases. Canada shows less constraint in using the chairmanship position to further national interests, not only through the focus on development in the north, which several claim is mostly aimed at an domestic audience, but also in the way they used their formal power to make political statements to Russia. Norway seemed more anxious to violate the norms of the traditional focus of the Arctic Council with its emphasis on climate change issues and the enhancement of the Council's efficiency. However, I argue that Norway indeed pursued its national interests, if only in a more silent and discrete manner. The Norwegian delegation managed to secure two deals of national interest: A common Scandinavian chairmanship with a joint agenda, and what eventually became a permanent secretariat in Tromsø. The domestic efforts to build a polar community in Tromsø have strengthened Norway's position as an Arctic state, as both the Arctic Council Indigenous Peoples Secretariat (IPS) and the Arctic Economic Council (AEC) are considering placing their secretariats in Tromsø.

Following the rationalist perspective on the Arctic Council chairmanship, it is clear that the formation of preferences and priorities emerged through interest aggregation at the domestic level in both cases. The analysis demonstrates that the chairmanships vary across three dimensions, consisting of regional, socio-economic, and constitutional priorities. Variation between the two cases can be explained by the fact that Norway and Canada assumed the

chairmanship position with disparate sets of preferences, and faced different domestic and international political contexts. The domestic political landscape shapes a government's behavior as chair by facilitating or rendering more difficult courses of action (Elgström 2003, 195). While the domestic situation in Norway facilitated and contributed to adding Arctic issues to the national agenda, the domestic situation in Canada constrained its behavior throughout the chairmanship period. Furthermore, Tallberg's conceptual framework presents an interesting lens through which one can view the chairmanship position of the Arctic Council; however, I must de-emphasize the chair's ability to function as a broker, since the Arctic Council is not a decision-making forum. However, I did not find any evidence that Norway tried to block issues from the agenda during their chairmanship period. I do not find that this weakens the theoretical framework, since Tallberg explicitly states that the conceptualization provides an overview of the *possible* power resources inherent in the chairmanship position.

So, to what extent is it possible to pursue national interests through the chairmanship position of the Arctic Council? I argue these two cases show that the chairmanship position provides opportunities for national gain, if the chair manages to make use of the possibilities the position has to offer. These opportunities are mostly caused by the institutional weakness related to the chairmanship position. The fact that the position, in large part, is driven by the traditions surrounding the chairmanship rather than a clear description of responsibilities makes it easier for the state serving as chair to wield the position in line with its own priorities. The chair is hence caught between two roles: To be a good administrator and an inspirational leader that sets a visionary agenda for the Arctic. These role expectations may not necessarily run contradictory to each other, but it can be a challenging task to manage the balance between the two. Additionally, to balance between neutral leadership and using the position for private gains may prove difficult. A chair is not immune to what happens in the rest of the world, which is evident for example in how Canada chose to respond to Russia's actions in Eastern Ukraine. This represents a clear breach with the ideal of the neutral role of the chairmanship.

That being said, both Norway and Canada touched upon the red line for how far the chair can go in pursuing national interests. An important difference is that Norway fought the battle over the secretariat mostly during the Danish chairmanship (2009-2011), and did so more or

less behind closed doors, and hence to a large extent avoided turning it into a sensitive issue during its own period as chair. Canada, on the other hand, had an agenda that to some extent differed from previous chairmanships, and the discussion and tension over its focus even became an issue in the media.⁴² Additionally, the attention towards the ministerial meeting in Iqaluit became overshadowed by the possibilities for spillover from the Ukraine crisis and speculations about the observer states. One important observation is that neither of the two states did anything throughout their periods serving as chairs that went against their national interests. On the contrary, both Norway and Canada explicitly stated their intent to pursue national interests when chairing the Council.⁴³

The central argument for why the other member states accept the chair's privileged position is the need for concentrated agenda-shaping powers in a political system. The general view is that a rotating chairmanship style secures a stable and just distribution of these privileges. Both Norwegian and Canadian informants stated that they took over the position with enthusiasm, and looked at it as a way to put their stamp on Arctic politics. One view expressed by many was that the chairmanship arrangements are hindering the Council from possessing a long-term perspective. To be presented with new agendas and new priorities every second year fragments the work of the Arctic Council "machinery" – the working groups and task forces. Consequently, the chairmanship agenda can become a superficial way of staking out a new direction for the Arctic Council. Several of my informants stated that the Arctic Council need to move away from the two-year chairmanship style, and lessen the chairs influence over the agenda. As Exner-Pirot states:

"People recognize that it is not healthy to change leaders every second years, but how do you stop it? How do you stop the Americans? This is their chance to be leaders in the Arctic. The Fins too, how are you going to stop them from putting a Finnish stamp on the Arctic Council? We are path dependent in this structure now. And so you might think, what would you do within the structure? In this regard, strengthening the permanent secretariat is a quite obvious one."

A sign that the Council is actually moving in this direction is that the permanent secretariat in Tromsø is taking over tasks previously belonging to the chair, such as control over administrative issues and the external representation. These evolvments, however, are not

⁴² See for example (Alaska Dispatch News 2015; Huffington Post 2015; The Globe and Mail 2014a).

⁴³ Canada, as previously mentioned, states this in their Arctic strategy from 2010. For Norway, the informants shared this.

that evident during the Canadian chairmanship, but still manifested in the new tasks given to the secretariat. Still, it is 19 years between each member state can enter the chairmanship position. It is, as mentioned before, associated with the possibility for a state to put its own stamp on Arctic issues; hence, institutional change does not happen overnight.

7.2 Implications for further research

In this thesis, I have tried to shed light on a power position that is often neglected in IR studies of political leadership – the chairmanship position – in an area where such studies, to my knowledge, have not been conducted before. The thesis thus presents new empirical knowledge on the performance of two Arctic Council chairs, and at the same time enriches the understanding of general international relations phenomena. However, the findings of these analyses cannot be generalized to the rest of the population of cases, the other six member states of the Arctic Council. Nevertheless, the analytical insight and the tools used in this thesis could prove useful for the study of other chairmanship periods in the Arctic Council. Furthermore, I have shown that Tallberg's theoretical framework has explanatory power outside studies on institutions where the chairmanship is equipped with decision-making power. The chairs in the Arctic Council have room for maneuver, due to the institutional weakness of the position, which allows the chair to develop new practices, in addition to their ability to set the agenda and structure it according to their national interests. Additionally, the theoretical inferences made in this study can contribute to the research conducted on the chairmanship position, and the degree of agenda-shaping power that lies in this role in the Arctic Council. Furthermore, one can see whether institutional differences create a different scope of action for the state in the chairmanship position.

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Appendix 1: List of informants

| Informant | Title | Date and place of interview |
|---------------------|---|--|
| Heather Exner-Pirot | Researcher (Strategist for Outreach and Indigenous Engagement, University of Saskatchewan, Canada | 04.10.14, Reykjavik, Arctic Circle conference, Iceland |
| Dr. Petra Dolata | Associate Professor, University of Calgary, Canada | 04.10.14, Reykjavik, Arctic Circle conference, Iceland |
| Informant 3 | Canadian government official | 04.10.14, Reykjavik, Arctic Circle conference, Iceland |
| Jeannette Menzies | Head of the Canadian International Centre for the Arctic Region (CICAR) | 29.01.15, The Canadian Embassy in Oslo, Norway |
| Lars Otto Reiersen | Head of Arctic Mapping Assessment Program (AMAP) | 29.01.15, Forskningsparken, Oslo, Norway |
| Stein Rosenberg | Advisor, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs | 30.01.15, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Oslo, Norway |
| Informant 7 | Person working closely with Arctic affairs | 09.02.15, Telephone interview, Oslo, Norway |
| Eirik Sivertsen | Member of Parliament | 19.02.15, Stortinget, Oslo, Norway |
| Gunnhild Eriksen | Advisor, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs | 10.03.15, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Oslo, Norway |
| Karsten Klepsvik | Ambassador, the Norwegian Embassy in Warsaw, Poland | 16.03.15, Telephone interview, , Oslo, Norway |
| Informant 11 | Person working closely with Arctic affairs | 29.04.15, Oslo, Norway |

* The informants are referred to either by name, position or reference number in the text.

Appendix 2: Interview guide

Informant

Name:

Date:

Position:

Field:

Presentation

I am writing my master's thesis at the Department of Political Science at the University of Oslo. The thesis is a study of the Norwegian and Canadian chairmanship period of the Arctic Council, respectively from 2006-2009 and 2013-2015.

Confidentiality

The interview will be a part of the background information in my thesis. I would appreciate it if I could have you on my list of informants for this thesis. No direct quotes will be used in the without the informants' permission.

Questions (Follow-up questions marked with indent)

1. In the Arctic foreign policy-document from 2010, four priorities were emphasized, namely (1) exercising sovereignty, (2) to promote economic and social development, (3) protect the Arctic environment and (4) empower the peoples of the north. If you were to rank these priorities considering the importance of each, how would it look?

- Why is this the most important/least important?

2. Have these priorities been dealt with in the Arctic Council before the chairmanship in 2013?

- If so, in what way?

3. How have the Canadian government worked to make sure that the priorities under the Arctic strategy are followed up in relation to the chairmanship period?

- Any concrete measures?

5. When did the process of preparing for the chairmanship period began, and what did it involve?

6. How have you worked to make sure that these priorities are looked after?

- Any concrete examples?

7. What was the response from the other Arctic states when the Canadian agenda for the chairmanship period was presented?

- How was the agenda received domestically?

8. How did the government work to gain support for its chairmanship initiatives?

9. Were there any priorities that proved difficult to carry out throughout the chairmanship?

10. Do you feel like you have reached the goals put forward in the chairmanship agenda?

- Have you attained something you didn't plan on beforehand?
- Are there any areas that proved difficult to implement?
- Is there anything now – in retrospect - you think Canada should have done different during the chairmanship period?

11. How have the Canadian priorities for the chairmanship period affected the Arctic Council's work?

12. What kind of power would you say lies in the chairmanship role?

13. How do you think the organization of the two-year rotating chairmanship works? Do you see any better leadership structure that would benefit the work of the Arctic Council in a better way?

14. In your view, are there any other important aspects of the chairmanship period that we have not discussed?

- Do you know of other people that would be interesting for me to talk to related to this thesis?

Thank you for your time.

